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HISTORY OF WISBECH  
AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.



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# HISTORY OF WISBECH

13545  
AND

NEIGHBOURHOOD,

DURING THE LAST

FIFTY YEARS—1848-1898.

BY

FREDERIC JOHN GARDINER, F.R. HIST. S.

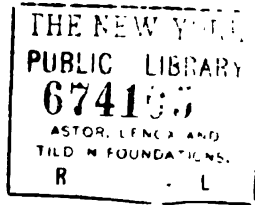
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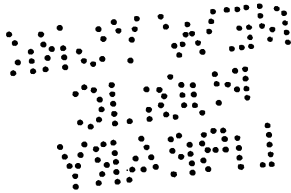
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"There is hardly a town or village in England that does not contain some interesting record of the past, or some great man whose name is a household word, and who has lived, toiled, and played the hero's part. This is eminently true of your old towns, whose corporate existence dates back centuries."—Rev. AUGUSTUS JESSOP, D.D., in *Random Roaming*.



TO THE  
LORD-LIEUTENANT OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE,  
ALEXANDER PECKOVER, ESQ.,  
LL.D., F.R.G.S.,

IN RECOGNITION OF VALUABLE HELP WHICH HE AND HIS FAMILY  
HAVE RENDERED TO THE PUBLIC  
INSTITUTIONS OF THE BOROUGH OF WISBECH,

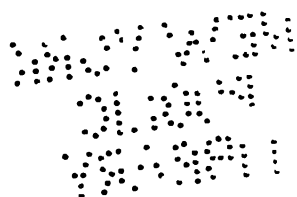
THIS VOLUME

IS DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR

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## PREFACE.

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It is with some diffidence that the preparation and publication of a History of Wisbech and of the Neighbourhood has been undertaken, with a view to recording some of the changes which have taken place in the Borough and Port of Wisbech and the surrounding district during the latter half of the Nineteenth Century. This responsibility was intended to have been placed in other and more experienced hands, but the task was declined, because of the labour it would necessarily involve, and it seemed to be likely that the century would pass away without any steps being taken for the collection and preservation of records of notable and important events which have occurred during the last fifty years. Although the exacting duties of journalistic life did not give much hope that this work, when undertaken, would make very rapid progress, the author nevertheless felt that the indulgence of the public would not be wanting under the circumstances, provided the undertaking was accomplished within a reasonable period of time. The completion, in 1895, of half-a-century of the existence of the *Isle of Ely and Wisbech Advertiser* had furnished, in the first instance, the *motif* for bringing together many recollections of past events, and these were primarily intended to have been published in the form of a small *brochure*. But in making the necessary research of newspaper files during that period, and compiling an index of occurrences, so much interesting information was forthcoming that it appeared desirable to rescue from oblivion some of this material. The compilation of this work has not been without its laborious side, having mainly filled leisure hours, though it has been relieved by the kind help received from many friends. It is with gratitude that we acknowledge the help which has thus been given, though it is mingled with regret that two or three of those who have corrected the earlier proofs have passed away, and are mentioned in the latter

portion of the work among those who are *past* and worthy citizens of our Borough. Amongst those who are contributors we may specially refer to the Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, Mr. Alexander Peckover, LL.D., F.R.G.S., who has kindly furnished particulars relating to our excellent Museum, a description of Bank House, which contains much that has not before appeared in a work of this character, and a paper on Wisbech Castles. Mr. Richard Bunbury Dawbarn, has, we regret to say, passed away during the progress of this work, but, before his last illness, he revised his lectures on "Wisbech in the Days of Our Grandfathers," which are incorporated in this volume. The late Mr. Robert Bennett, Deputy Town Clerk, whose knowledge of local matters was extensive, also gave valuable help in revising proofs. To Mr. Robert Dawbarn, Clerk to the Middle Level Commissioners, we are indebted for a very complete record of the Middle Level Inundation and particulars respecting the Drainage of the Fen District. The Rev. R. E. R. Watts, M.A., Mr. Edward Hugh Jackson, Clerk of the Peace and of the Charity Trustees, Mr. George Carrick, Town Clerk of Wisbech, Mr. J. T. Marshall, of Tydd, and Mr. H. Musson, Public Auditor of Friendly Societies, have assisted to lighten the difficulties, and to help forward the completion of the work. To Mr. Kenerell, Mr. E. Johnson, Mr. H. Mehew, and others, we are also indebted for assistance in the numerous illustrations with which the work is provided. The manager and staff of our establishment have given considerable care and thought to the printing and correction of the work, and the demands made upon a newspaper office will, we hope, account for any shortcomings in this direction that may be found in its arrangement or printing, although it is with some satisfaction that we are able to state that the book has been wholly printed in Wisbech.

It will be a source of gratification to Wisbechians, in view of the memorable Jubilee Celebrations in the Borough, and Royal visits, to know that Her Majesty the Queen, who visited Wisbech, when Princess Victoria, with the Duchess of Kent, in September, 1835, has requested that a copy of the work may be forwarded to Windsor Castle. Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales have also intimated, through Sir Francis Knollys, K.C.B., their wish that a copy may be sent to Sandringham House.

One incident, which occurred last year, may serve to show why this volume may claim a wider range of usefulness than its merely local interest. The late Mr. William Ewart Gladstone,

formerly Prime Minister of this country, delivering a speech at Hawarden, referred, with perfect truth, to Wisbech as a centre of fruit and flower culture, but proceeded to describe it as situated in the County of Suffolk! To refresh Mr. Gladstone's recollection of the geographical position of Wisbech, a copy of *Walker and Craddock's History* was forwarded to him. Mr. Gladstone courteously replied, in acknowledging the gift (which was added to his library), in the following terms:—

Dear Sir,

I have to thank you for the undeserved kindness of a very interesting gift. And I regret that a defect of memory, incident to old age should (as is probable) have been the very unsatisfactory instrument which has thus qualified me to be the recipient of your courtesy.

Yours very faithfully,

Hawarden, August 5th, 1897.

W. E. GLADSTONE.

Mr. Gladstone's graceful acceptance of the volume leads to the presumption that, in like manner, this work may define and increase the knowledge of many, who, living in distant parts of the country, are not aware of the interest surrounding the borough and locality. Not a few who have migrated to Colonial or Foreign lands, have assured us that it will revive pleasurable recollections of this home of earlier days, and of associations with the memory of many honoured citizens

Whose distant footsteps echo,  
Through the corridors of time.

The Nineteenth Century is fast passing away, but before it is gone, and at no greater distance than June next, three-and-a-half centuries will have elapsed since Edward VI., on June 1st, 1549, granted a Charter to the Town of Wisbech, thus constituting it among the older of the Incorporated Boroughs in the Kingdom. It has had, during that period of time, many enterprising and noble sons, who have left behind them a record on the page of history, which is deserving of emulation by a generation in whose hands the future destiny of our town and district lies.

May the next century, whomsoever may live to see its advent, be characterised by more distinctive progress and development, and greater advantages, in the highest sense of the word, to Wisbech and its inhabitants, than the fifty years which are here recorded, is the sincere wish of

THE AUTHOR.

*Trevordale, Wisbech,*  
*December, 1898.*



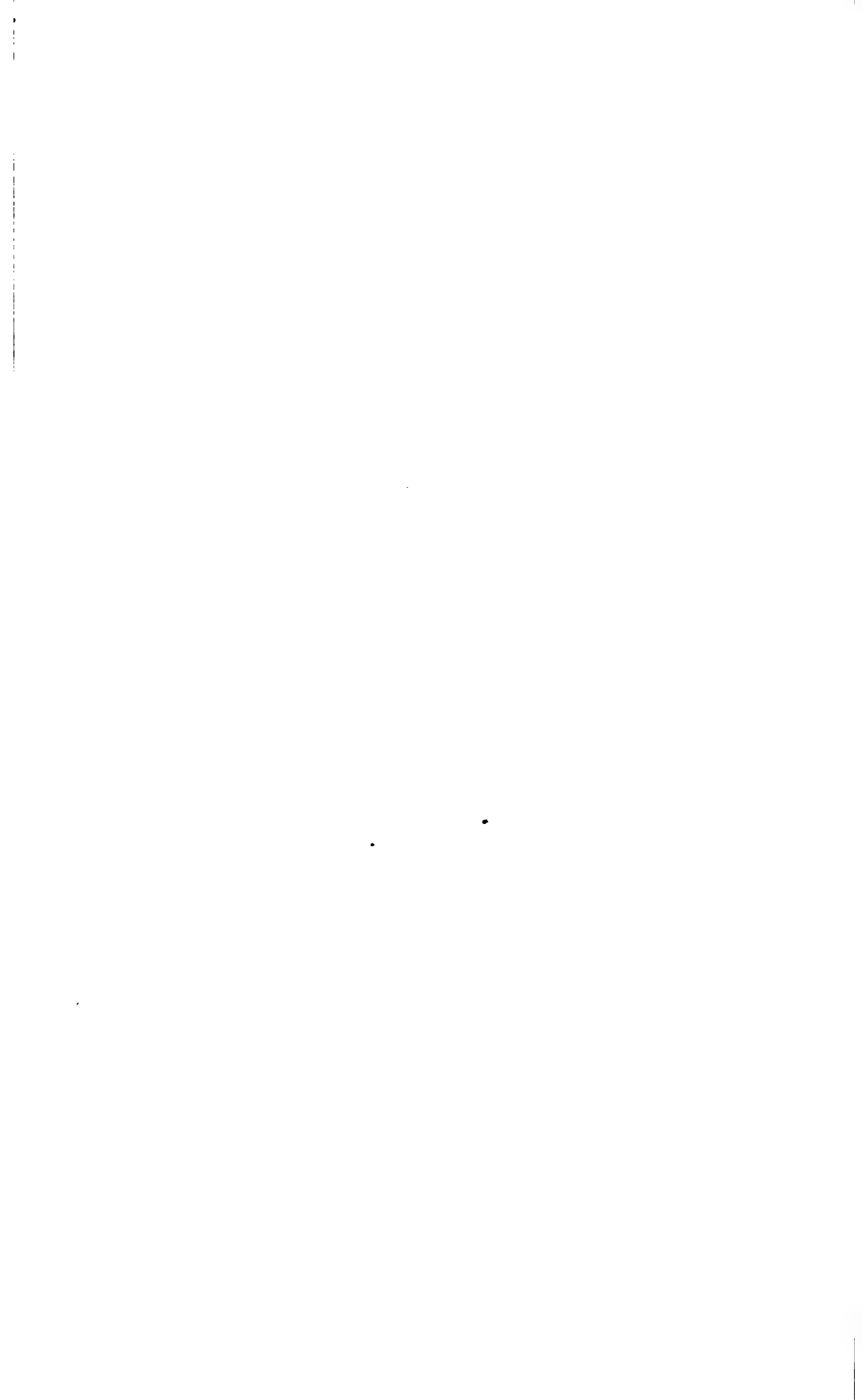
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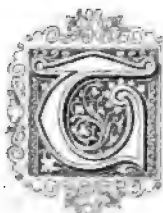
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# HISTORY OF WISBECH

## AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

### CHAPTER I.

#### KING JOHN'S REGALIA LOST AT WISBECH. THE CASTLE AS A STATE ECCLESIASTICAL PRISON.



THE old local proverb, "Rising *was*, Lynn *is*, Wisbech *will be*," appears to have tersely expressed the relative positions of those places in the earlier portion of the present century, or at a still more distant period. It probably indicated the decadence of Castle Rising, the consequent increased importance of King's Lynn, and the anticipated development of Wisbech. The two Members of Parliament who once sat for Castle Rising have long since disappeared from the precincts of Westminster, and the Municipal Act deprived it of its Mayor, although at one time Castle Rising Mayors took precedence of all others in the County of Norfolk.\* Some of the ancient glory pertaining to Castle Rising in its halcyon days, has been transferred to the seaport town of King's Lynn,† which, owing to the patronage of

\* Castle Rising, or, as Camden calls it, Rising Castle, is a Corporation, and sends two members to the British Senate. It was formerly the most considerable seaport in the County next to Lynn and Yarmouth, but the harbour is now choking up. It was once governed by a Mayor, recorder, high steward, twelve aldermen, and fifty burgesses, but it has now two aldermen only, who serve the office of Mayor and take precedence of all other Mayors in Norfolk — *Cooke's Topographical Description of Norfolk*.

† There is a couplet which says—

Rising *was* a seaport town, when Lynn *was* but a marsh;  
Now Lynn, it is the seaport town, and Rising fares the worse.

King Henry VIII.\*—its proximity to Sandringham having further increased its importance—ranks as a Royal borough, and has still one representative in Parliament, though it is not long since that it could boast of two. The originator of this proverb, whosoever he may have been, also foresaw, apparently with prophetic intuitiveness, that there were possibilities of greater prosperity in the future of Wisbech. That this prophecy has proved a perfectly correct one, will not be questioned, but to what extent that forecast has been realized at the present time, or is likely to be in the future, the readers of this volume will be able to draw their own conclusions from the description given of the material improvements which have been made in its administration, and in its commercial and social aspects, during the last half-century. Shakespeare reminds us in King Henry II. that—

There is a history in all men's lives  
Figuring the nature of the time deceas'd,  
The which observed a man may prophecy  
With a near aim of the main chance of things,  
As not yet come to life ; which in their seeds,  
And weak beginnings, lie intresured.

That which applies to the history of men's lives may also be applicable to communities, and in tracing the vicissitudes of the town and neighbourhood, it will be seen that its "weak beginnings" have developed into that greater vigour and strength, typical of many well-administered centres of industry in the present progressive age. Looking back for half a century or more, when there were no railways, when letters were few and far between, and when few people travelled out of their own locality, a wide difference is discernible in the greater enterprise and commercial activity which to-day characterizes this borough, for though limited in population, yet its citizens are by no means indifferent to its advancement and prosperity, whether regarded from a religious, social, or commercial standpoint.

It is quite certain, then, that the material progress made in Wisbech has justified the forecast of the proverb of long ago that Wisbech "will be." Less than a century ago, it is told that so little was Wisbech known in those benighted days, that its geographical position was sometimes an enigma to strangers. One individual having important business to transact at Wisbech, thought it prudent to proceed from Dublin to London, and then to write to the Wisbech authorities to know the exact locality of

\* King Henry VIII., who granted various privileges to Lynn, changed the name of it from "Bishop's Lynn" to Lynn Regis or "King's Lynn."

the borough and how he might safely journey into the unknown Fen country. Possibly, he may have thought that the Fenland folk were living in the midst of a swamp, infested with aguish fevers, and that the inhabitants resembled the ancient Swiss lake-dwellers who built their houses on piles above the water-level! At no greater distance than Norwich, an intelligent manufacturer offered an extra discount upon his goods rather than arrange to pay the carriage to a place, of which his knowledge was of the most shadowy nature. Even such an authority as Bradshaw's Railway Guide was unmistakably at fault, for, in an early copy, one finds the sailing of the old "Forager" steamer, plying between Hull and Wisbech, included in the list of "Steam Packets to *Foreign* Stations." In what part of a foreign land Wisbech was supposed to be located, we are not told. Twice only have we heard of another place of the same name. A native who had emigrated to America, when coaching in Canada, alighted at a village which he was startled to find was called "Wisbech." "Why," he replied to his informant, "I was born at Wisbech, in England, but how came this place to be so called?" The coach went on without the mystery being solved, though it is probable that some settler from the mother country had desired to perpetuate the memory of his far-off Fenland home in the New World to which he had migrated. It has also been affirmed that there is a place named Wisbech in Scandinavia, but its locality is not known, unless, it may be, that the seaport town of Wisby, capital of the Island of Gothland in the Baltic, is supposed, from the similarity of name, to have given rise to the statement.

It is not the intention of this volume to recapitulate the ancient history of Wisbech, further than to hastily review the more prominent facts, and to refer to some fresh data with regard to King John's disaster, and the history of its successive Castles, which more recent researches have brought to light. To denominate Wisbech as an ancient borough is no groundless assertion. It can certainly trace its history back for more than 1,200 years—to A.D. 657. In that year Wisbech is mentioned in the charter of grants made to Peterborough by the Saxon king, Wulfere or Wulpher, which refers to "the principal river that goethe to Elme and Wisbeche," viz., the Great Ouse, thus specifying the limits of that monastery's possessions. The late Mr. Jonathan Peckover, F.S.A., stated that the earliest mention of Wisbech occurs in the Thorney Red Book, in the possession of the Earl of Westmoreland, at Apethorpe. This book is dated at some time in the



sixth century, which would carry its history back still further. Most probably, it was a fort of the Romans, by whom, it is supposed, the river banks in the neighbourhood were constructed, Roman remains and coins of that period having been discovered. At a later period, Wisbech is mentioned, in 1000 A.D., in the time of Etheldred II., as one of the manors given by Oswy, father of Ailwyn, Bishop of Elmham, Norfolk, to the monastery of Ely, on his son being admitted to the convent. It was thus one of the oldest possessions of the Church of Ely. When the famous Hereward, usually regarded as a Fen hero, but whom a well-known Bishop is said to have lately described as a "vulgar free-booter," was driven out of the fens and morasses in the Isle of Ely, which afforded him a secure refuge for a long time, William the Conqueror built a strong Castle at Wisbech, where probably an entrenched camp before existed, in order to overawe the sturdy Fenmen who had given him so much trouble. It was begun in 1086, the last year of his reign, hence no mention of its erection occurs in the Domesday Book, that "spring and fountain of all chorography," as Col. Watson denominates that work. But if the town or castle is not mentioned, "the manor of Wisbece," belonging to the Abbot of Ely, finds a place in it, and its prolific fisheries are recorded, especially those of eels—from which the Isle of Ely derives its name—no less than 14,000 finding their way annually to the abbot and his dependents. This ancient Norman Castle commanded the estuary formed by the Welle stream, or the Ouse, Nene, and Wyse, having a drawbridge towards the church, "the gate towards 'Elme'" mentioned by Dugdale. The only known representation of this Castle is to be found in the rude outline of a fortress, with circular keep, somewhat like that of Windsor, which is depicted on the official seal, made of steel, used by Sir John Colville, one of the Governors or Constables of the Castle in 1410, and now in the possession of Colonel Sir H. E. Colville, C.B., (Grenadier Guards) at Lullington. That this represents the Castle of William the Conqueror is also confirmed by the seal of the Trinity Guild, which has three human figures surmounting a castle, similar to that on the official seal of the Governor. The capital of a Norman respond, decorated with angle-volutes, was unearthed some years ago from the Castle moat, and deposited in Wisbech Museum. Some archaeologists have thought that this might have been a part of the ancient hall or chapel of the Castle. The Bishop of Glasgow (Robert Wishart) and the wife of Robert Bruce were said to have been prisoners in this Castle in 1314.

From an historical point of view, the visit of King John to Wisbech Castle, at the time that his army was overwhelmed with the disaster and loss which caused that monarch's speedy death, is the most memorable event in its annals. King John found loyal supporters in Wisbech and Lynn against his barons, and recompensed their loyalty by confirming to the former borough a charter granted by Richard I., exempting it from toll in the markets and fairs of England. But otherwise his associations with Wisbech Castle must have been very far from happy, for it was in the vicinity of the town, in all probability, that he met with that disaster which cost him not only the loss of his regalia, treasures, and baggage, but hastened his death. Mr. Richard B. Dawbarn, in his interesting paper on "Wisbech Castle," which was read before the British Archæological Society, refers to the dates given in the 22nd volume of the *Archæologia* taken from King John's *Itinerary*, (said to have been found among some documents in the Tower) as follows:—Oct. 7 and 8, 1216, Spalding; Oct. 9, 10, and 11, King's Lynn; Oct. 12, Wisbech. Walker and Craddock, the local historians, fix the point at which the King crossed the estuary as scarcely more than a mile below the present bridge, where the stream ran between the Leverington and Walsoken banks. But Mr. J. T. Marshall, of Tydd, holds a different theory, which we give in his own words:—

As it is well authenticated that King John left Lynn on Oct. 11th, 1216, and slept in Wisbech Castle on the next night, the 12th of that month, it is clear that he must have crossed both the Little Ouse, near Lynn, and the Great Ouse, near Wisbech. Now as he was evidently aiming for Wisbech, it seems very probable that he crossed the Little Ouse either near to Lynn, or about Wiggenhall St. Germans, then followed the high parts of Marshland by Wiggenhall St. Mary's, Lord's Bridge, and Tilney Buck to Tilney St. Lawrence. Then he would journey by what has since been called the "highways," and—previous to the making of the Eau Brink Cut and the Free Bridge at Lynn—until recently, the Turnpike road from Lynn to Wisbech, which would bring him to Walsoken. Between Walsoken and Wisbech there would only be a ford over the Great Ouse or the Welle stream at low water, and a ferry opposite the "Ferry Boat" Inn, in Timber Market, now Norfolk Street East, at high water. Now the ford, say between New-common Bridge near Wisbech, and the town, seems the most likely place for King John and his followers to cross to get into Wisbech, and it is here that he most probably met with the great disaster which cost him his life. Having reached Wisbech in order to get into Lincolnshire, it would not be necessary for him to cross the estuary between Wisbech and Walton Dam, as Walker and Craddock in their history state that he probably did, or "within a mile of Wisbech

Bridge," as Mr. R. B. Dawbarn suggested in his paper on Wisbech Castle, for at either of these points the estuary would be a mile to a mile-and-half in width; nor would the King cross from the "Cross Keys" at Walpole to the green marsh on the Lincolnshire side, some three to four miles wide, but simply take his army over the little "bec" or stream called the Wyse, from Guyhirn, near the bridge, or by the bridge itself, if there were one, for at this point the stream would probably be not many feet wide. He would then follow the green marshes skirting the Roman bank and, possibly, lingering to recover some of his treasure, he may have slept in King John's house, (if there were such a house then) a mile north of what is called Sutton Bridge, but not at that time existent, even as "Sutton Wash" (its original name) on the 13th October. The foregoing may be a novel theory as to where King John's disaster occurred, but it corresponds with the account given by Matthew Paris, the historian, (who lived at the time and wrote the King's life) as to its occurring in the Welle stream. Marshland, at that time, evidently had no communication either with Cambridgeshire or Lincolnshire, except as regards the former, by a ford or ferry, over the Great Ouse or Welle stream, and as regards the latter, over the Estuary from Walpole Cross Keys to the opposite side. Its only communication with higher Norfolk and Lynn would seem to have been, possibly by a bridge at Wiggshall St. Germans or by fords over the Little Ouse, so that Marshland, at that time, might very appropriately have been called an "island."

In the narrative of the disaster, by Matthew Paris, a contemporary chronicler who died in 1259, it is stated that the King lost his baggage in crossing the Welle stream. The translation of this account, which is in Latin, is as follows:—

Leaving the town of Lynn, which he had greatly distinguished and honoured with donations, he attempted to force a passage over the water which is called Welle stream, and there suddenly and irrecoverably lost all his waggons, treasures, costly goods and regalia. A whirlpool in the middle of the water absorbed all into its depths, with men and horses, so that hardly one escaped to announce the misfortune to the King.

The Rev. John Davies, a former rector of Walsoken, when lecturing on the "Antiquities of Wisbech and Neighbourhood" in November, 1866, pointed out from a map lent to him by Mr. E. H. Jackson, of Wisbech, that the "Welle stream" was the same as the Great Ouse or rather the Ouse and Nene united. Possibly, he added, the King's regalia lies still buried in the old water course where the Canal is, and may some day be recovered. What a "find" that would be for the shareholders of the Wisbech Canal Company! It appears, however, to be quite certain that this grievous misfortune occurred to King John's army in the immediate neighbourhood of Wisbech, if not actually within the limits of the borough, and that the monarch's visit to Wisbech

Castle must have been associated with the trouble and anxiety which so soon had a fatal termination. As a result of the loss of the Crown jewels, it was necessary that his successor should be crowned with a plain gold ring, instead of the jewelled crown, which facetious people of those days and down to the present time have said had been lost in the Wash! With reference to the tradition that King John slept at a farm house a mile or two north of Sutton Bridge after the disaster, it may be mentioned that the house referred to was formerly denominated in Guy's Hospital documents, to which institution it belongs, as King John's house, the farm also receiving a like name. Some years ago in a lecture delivered at Tydd St. Mary, Mr. J. T. Marshall referring to this tradition, said that the violence of the sea did immense damage in 1236, and that it is not improbable that both house and bank might be annihilated; also the village of Dolproon, the existence of which has been handed down in the quaint lines—

When Dolproon stood, Long Sutton was a wood,

When Dolproon was washed down, Long Sutton became a town.

Twenty years after King John's misfortune and death, Wisbech Castle, the church, and a portion of the town were grievously damaged by this same inundation which swept away Dolproon in 1236. The castle remained in ruins until granted by the Crown in the fourteenth century to the See of Ely, when John Morton, Bishop of Ely (afterwards made a Cardinal), rebuilt it, and immortalised his name by the construction of Morton's Leam, which was a cut made to straighten the course of the Nene.\* The castle became one of the ten castles, palaces, and manor houses which were at that time attached to the See of Ely, and it was John de Wisbeche, a monk living at Wisbech Castle, who superintended for a period of 28 years, under Alan de Walsingham, the erection of that beautiful example of Decorated architecture, the Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral, the first stone of which was laid on Lady-day, 1321. Whilst the monk and his workmen were digging the foundations, they unearthed a brazen vessel full of money, with which he paid the workmen so long as it lasted. To judge from the beauty of the chapel, before it was mutilated and grievously defaced, it would seem to have been an exceedingly valuable find of hidden treasure. A still more famous

\* It is said that at the place where Morton's Leam joined the Wyse at Guyhirn, the Bishop built a tower of brick, that he might see the men at their work making the cut, and give his instructions accordingly.

name in Wisbech history is that of Bishop Alcock, who, when Bishop Morton was translated to the Primacy, succeeded to the Bishopric of Ely, in 1486, and was the founder of Jesus College, Cambridge. He made Wisbech Castle his residence and died there. It was remarked of Bishop Alcock that no one in England had a greater reputation for sanctity. He was equally renowned for his hospitality and munificence, as well as for his love of buildings and skill in architecture. The late Precentor Venables, in a paper on the Palace at Ely,\* says that Bishop Alcock rebuilt it, and that the two stately towers which flank its courtyard bear witness to his powers as a designer. He died in Wisbech Castle on October 1st, 1500, and was buried in the sumptuous chapel which he had erected at the end of the northern aisle of Ely Cathedral.

But persecuting days were at hand, and in their mistaken zeal and cruel intolerance, Wisbech Castle became a State ecclesiastical prison, in which many able men, both Protestants and Papists, true to their conscientious convictions and religious belief, died lingering deaths or were brought out and burned at the stake, rather than deny their faith. During Queen Mary's reign, William Wolsey and Robert Piggott, who were Protestants,† were not only incarcerated in the Castle, but were burnt at the stake for the crime of heresy. The history of Wisbech Castle is thus associated with that "noble army of martyrs" who have laid down their lives for their Protestant faith. The prisoners in the Castle were, however, chiefly Papist priests, who during the reigns of Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I., were treated with similar intolerance to the Protestants in the preceding reign. Several noteworthy ecclesiastical dignitaries were detained in "durance vile," some of whom died in captivity, and were buried in Wisbech churchyard. Among the more distinguished prisoners were two Bishops of Lincoln, Thomas Whyte and Thomas Watson, the latter the master of St. John's College, Cambridge, and a strenuous Papist. He had obtained the restitution of the plate and ornaments taken from Durham Cathedral while he was Dean, and subsequently received preferment to the See of Lincoln.§ But when Elizabeth came to the throne, he suffered twenty

\* *Good Words*, September, 1895.

† In *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, vol. iii, p. 360, it is stated that Wolsey and Piggott were burnt at the stake at Ely. See note at end of this chapter. *Watson's History of Wisbech* fixes the martyrdom at Wisbech, but quotes no authority for that statement.

§ *History of County of Lincoln*, 1848, Vol. 1.

years' imprisonment in London, and was then removed to Wisbech Castle, where he died in 1584, and was buried in the graveyard adjoining Wisbech Parish Church, close by the Castle walls. As one writer has pathetically remarked, "He was summoned in the brightest hour of his intellect to rust away for thirty years in the prison cells of Wisbech Castle." According to Cole's MS. he was buried in an obscure manner, which implied a suspicion as to the circumstances attending his death. In the following year, 1585, John de Feckenham, Queen Mary's private confessor and the last Abbot of Westminster, died in the Castle, and was buried in Wisbech Churchyard. Although in prison, he succeeded in carrying out some works which are still remembered, for he caused a road to be built across the Fens, called "Fecknam's way," and erected a stone cross at Wisbech, possibly the predecessor of the obelisk on the Market Place referred to later. Father Weston, a Jesuit, otherwise known as Edmonds (the hero of a book from which Shakespeare derived some names introduced into *King Lear*), was a prisoner for eleven years, and has left an account of his incarceration.\* Some thirty or forty prisoners were in captivity at the same time as Father Weston, and Mr. L. Gaches, of Peterborough, in *Fenland Notes and Queries*, gives extracts from Father Weston's diary and other authorities, as to the behaviour of the Jesuits within the Castle walls. In 1595, during Queen Elizabeth's reign, a dispute arose at Christmas time as to whether the morris dance and hobby horse should be permitted to have a place in the festivities. Such frivolities were strongly denounced by the Puritans of those days as pagan superstitions, and the matter was so earnestly contested by Father Weston and his followers that it became the subject of a serious division and conflict. Father Weston, the leader of the Jesuits, had been chosen head of the community with the title of "Agent," by nineteen of the prisoners, an assumption of authority that caused great offence. When these Christmas diversions were introduced by Father Bluet, "Old Blue" as he was irreverently called, and by Dr. Bagshaw, Father Weston's followers "hummed and hah'ed, deeming such diversion not exempt from sin," and left the hall *en masse*. Father Weston retreated to his cell for a fortnight and subsequently issued a set of orders and rules to his supporters. Father Southworth also took a message to Father Bluet and to twelve others, when they were seated at the high table at hall time, desiring him to give place to Father Weston, but the

\* *Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers, related by themselves*, by John Morris, Priest of the Society of Jesus, 1875.

demand not receiving attention, the Governor of the Castle, William Medley, a Justice of the Peace, was appealed to, and leave asked by Father Weston's faction "to keep commons by themselves apart from the rest, with intent to avoid sin." But a worse difficulty arose. The Papist priests in Wisbech Castle were maintained by the alms of the faithful, and these alms flowed more freely towards those prisoners who joined Weston's faction. This led not only to a controversy as to money matters, but to endless accusations and scandals, which were the subject of a prolonged quarrel. The Jesuits were accused of treasonable designs upon the throne so soon as Queen Elizabeth should die. The Government, however, played off these factions one against the other, but violent things were written and printed, and William Watson, long after the commencement of the dispute, published an account which "delighted the enemies of the Catholic Church," by its hostile account of the scandal. Father Morris, himself a Jesuit, in describing these quarrels, declines to criticise so thorny a controversy, but its prolongation for more than seven years was not creditable to either faction. As an illustration of the times in which these events took place, it may be mentioned that this William Medley, J.P., was chosen gaoler in place of Edward Gray, who had been "removed by a most dreadful death." Medley appointed a hearing in the Castle Hall to settle the differences between the conflicting parties. After investigating the grievances of both factions, he decided to interpose his authority, and whilst commending the quiet lives of Father Weston and his supporters, rebuked the turbulent spirits and humours of Father Bluet, Dr. Bagshaw and others. But this failed to restore peace, and Father Dolman was ultimately sent down as arbitrator, though he did not succeed much better, for tradition tells us that the old man "sadly retraced his steps to London." Evidently the Wisbech prisoners caused their gaolers no little anxiety, and this foolish contention for precedence led subsequently to strange and riotous scenes at dinner time, the pewter platters flying about, and John Foxley, of Wisbiche, shoemaker, deposing that he heard as he passed the Castle, the "babbling and great noise the Papists made at dinner," to which the Papists replied that it was not "babbling" at all, but good doctrine! The repute of the Jesuits and their disputes grew apace and Wisbech became quite a place of pilgrimage. Evidently, as Lovelace writes, "stone walls do not a prison make," always, for it is related, that by favour of their Keeper, the Jesuits of Wisbech made the Castle "as dangerous as a seminary college in the heart and midst of England."

About twenty-eight seminary Priests and Jesuits had compounded with their keeper for their diet and provisions, entertaining also their servants as if they were in a free college and not in prison. Daily, certain gentlemen and gentlewomen dined and supped with them in their chambers, from whom they not only received, but dispatched intelligence to all quarters of the realm. Nevertheless, discipline was maintained, and a Justice of the Peace usually attended at the dinner hour and called the roll, while the keeper and his wife presided, one at each end of the table, watching diligently lest a word should be dropped that they could not hear. Some of the recusants resented such espionage and their evil behaviour was reported from time to time, one offender being committed to irons, and another to the restraint of his chamber for ten days. Even the prisoners' servants did not escape persecution, for we are told that two Wisbech boys, Thomas and George Fisher, both born of poor parents, whom the keeper admitted into the gaol that they might be useful as servants to the prisoners, learned so much about the Papist religion that they attached themselves to that faith, and failing to attend church, were reported to the Governor. He fixed on a festival day and commanded the boys to be present, but failing to do this, they were cruelly whipped in Wisbech Market Place, in the presence of the people, and then put in irons. One of the boys resented this treatment, escaping to Belgium, and was subsequently admitted to holy orders as a priest. The average number of prisoners was from thirty to thirty-five, and although they were confined in their cells day and night, at dinner and supper they met at a common table provided "at no light cost," it is said, by the Papists. It is stated that despite the restrictions placed upon them during their captivity they managed to set up an altar in the vaults. These vaults, which are still in existence, are believed by some to date from Tudor times, and are built of brick.\* There is a well in the vaults which gives an excellent supply of water, and above the entrance is the following inscription:—

Where these vaults are erected stood the Ancient Castle of Wisbech, built by William the Conqueror, 1071. In 1236 it was destroyed by an inundation of the sea, and was rebuilt by Cardinal Morton, Bishop of Ely. In the reign of Elizabeth, it was used as a prison. In 1793, Joseph Medworth purchased the Castle with its appurtenances, and in 1815 took down the Castle for the completing of his plan of streets and houses on the premises.

\* There are also ancient vaults under houses in other parts of the town, notably under Mr. Broadberry's, Market Place, and Mr. Leach's, High-street.



In a work recently issued, entitled *Gillow's Biographical Dictionary of English Catholics*, a lady informs us that the fourth volume contains the following reference to Father Metham, a Jesuit, who died in Wisbech Castle after sixteen years' captivity within its dreary walls. "He was born 1532 and died January 28th, 1592, in Wisbech Castle. He seems to have been in several prisons before his final commitment to Wisbech Castle in 1580. He was a virtuous and learned priest, and was strongly recommended by Dr. Allen for the Archbishopric of York in the event of the success of the Spanish Armada. According to Dr. Bagshaw, he disapproved of Father Weston's proceedings. A curious instance of his learning appears in the record of the lecture on the Hebrew or Greek Scriptures given at Wisbech, after the priests had turned this prison into a quasi-college."

But even more serious conspiracies may have been at work in Wisbech Castle, than those of the Catholic prisoners, for it is suggested by Mr. R. B. Dawbarn, in his paper on the history of this prison, that it is not impossible that the notorious Gunpowder Plot owes its origin to the association within the walls of the prison, of two of its promoters, Robert Catesby and Francis Tresham. That these arch-conspirators were prisoners here together, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, is known, but whether the foul plot was hatched and prepared in the Castle cells, there is no authentic testimony to decide. In Aikin's *Memoirs of James I.*, it is stated that on the approach of the Armada, Robert Catesby, a gentleman of fortune and consequence, was committed to safe custody in Wisbech Castle, his zeal having rendered him an object of suspicion to Queen Elizabeth's government. Francis Tresham was also a fellow prisoner with Catesby at Wisbech in 1608. Nevertheless, it is evident that this State prison obtained quite a remarkable notoriety on account of its Papist intrigues which were fostered within its walls, and which led to disputes in those turbulent days that often needed strong measures to repress and keep in subjection. There was another use beside that of an ecclesiastical prison to which Wisbech Castle was probably put in those superstitious times, for on the 25th May, 1637, we find that a witch, the instigator of Fen Riots, was committed to prison, probably in the Castle. Mr. W. C. Little, J.P., of Stag's Holt, March, has recorded in the interesting pages of *Fenland Notes and Queries*, an entry in the Domestic Series of State Papers of 1637, in which reference is made to—

"Persons sent for upon complaint of the Earl of Bedford for mutinous acts committed in Cambridgeshire, we having committed one

of them, the first mover of this mutiny to the prison at Wisbech, who is by her neighbours esteemed a witch, to which opinion the messengers adhere, for they, taking boat near her house, were bitterly accursed by her, and soon the waterman was struck with a lamentable crick in the back that he was constrained to get help."

The Castle was repaired by Bishop Lancelot Andrews, who laid out about £2000 upon it, between 1609 and 1619.\* Whilst Cromwell was Governor of the Isle of Ely, prior to his Protectorate, it was held by the Parliamentarians. An outpost was established near the Horse Shoe bend of the river Nene, to secure the passes out of Lincolnshire which were in the hands of the Royalists. Cromwell, whom the people styled the "Lord of the Fens," exhorted the people not to pay new taxes until the trial of John Hampden for refusing to pay ship money was decided, and he was of opinion that throughout the Fens, public opinion only needed direction to offer a stout resistance to the imposition. For that purpose, he charged himself with the formation of an Eastern Counties' Association. The King had broken faith with the Adventurers, at the head of whom was the Earl of Bedford, by taxing their new properties so heavily that if he carried his measures against them, they would have been ruined men. When Cromwell visited the Fens, we are told that "although the wide plain, so lately under water, and still glistening with meres and water courses, seemed as if it were uninhabited, men and women collected by scores and hundreds in the hope of a word or look from the Lord of the Fens. For everybody he had one exhortation to give—to pay no penny of new taxes till the case was settled." It is certain that Oliver Cromwell, some seven years before he became Protector, visited the town, as the following laconic epistle taken from a book on Cavalry, by Captain Nolan, and published about 1854,† will show:—

Wisbeach, this day, 11th November, 1642.

Dear Friend,—Let the saddler see to the horse gear. I learn from one, many are ill served. If a man has not good weapons, horse and harness, he is as nought.

From your friend,

Auditor Squire.

OLIVER CROMWELL.

The Governor of the Isle of Ely evidently looked well after his faithful Ironsides, and was not indifferent to their equipment. These instructions probably refer to a troop of sixty horse, raised

\* In 1611, the Bishop, with the learned Casaubon, visited Cambridge and Ely and came through Wisbech, where they were met by the Bailiff and a great company on horseback on their entry into the town.—*Life of Bishop Andrews*.

† Quoted in *Wisbech Advertiser*, January 6th, 1854.

for the defence of the Isle of Ely, of which Col. John Hobart, of Outwell, was in command, and for the maintenance of, which £70 per week had to be furnished by the Isle. This neighbourhood seems to have favoured the Parliamentary interest, and it is known that Cromwell was hospitably received, particularly at Needham Hall, Elm, the present residence of Mr. Walter West.\*

Subsequently to this, Cromwell caused the Castle to be dismantled and destroyed, possibly to prevent its occupation by any enemy that might obtain possession of it. No representation of this building is known to exist, but it was said to have covered two acres of ground, and to stand in an area of four acres. The moat, which was forty feet wide, was filled from the river, and the drawbridge was where Castle Square now is. An ancient stone foundation supposed to have belonged to this drawbridge was discovered some years ago in Yorke Row. The appearance of the Castle itself has been likened to Haddon Hall. Owing to the neglect of its owners, in the time of Cromwell, it had fallen into such a dilapidated condition that part of the prisoners' cells fell in, whilst they were absent.

Whilst Cromwell was Protector, the site of Wisbech Castle was sold, in 1658, to the Right Hon. John Thurloe, his principal Secretary of State, who is said to have erected a handsome residence from the design of Inigo Jones, the great architect.† This house was almost an exact copy of Longthorpe Hall, Peterborough, (the seat of Lord Chief Justice Oliver St. John) and resembled Coleshill House, Berkshire. The Castle overlooked Castle Square, facing the river, and was placed on the terrace, elevated by arches, which are still existing. The moat was partially filled, but the "Deadman's Pond," and other pits in the Vicarage grounds, as well as hollows in Castle Square, which then existed, were remains which left traces of its original course. Thurloe, of whom there is a fine oil-portrait in the Library of the

\* Oliver Cromwell with his troops, is said to have stayed one night at Needham Hall, Elm. The occupant of that mansion offered his best bed to Cromwell, which he declined, and he chose to spend the night resting on a solid oak table. Such of his officers as could be accommodated, were supplied with beds, the remainder of his troops finding shelter in the outbuildings and premises. In 1827, an old man was living at Elm, who had heard his grandfather describe seeing, as a boy, Cromwell and his troops passing through the avenue leading to the Hall. Cromwell, at that time was said to be "ransacking the Fens." He also made the Nine Chimney House (now partly pulled down and rebuilt), at Emneth, his headquarters.—*Watson's History of Wisbech*.

† An engraving of Thurloe's residence, taken from a painting removed from the Castle, to the Palace, at Ely, appears in the Stephenson's Appendix to *Bentham's Ely*.

Wisbech Museum,\* was subsequently elected to represent Wisbech in Parliament, the sheriff of each county in those days being often left to determine which were parliamentary boroughs. Wisbech consequently resolved to assert its right, and it is recorded in the Journals of the House of Commons of 1658-9, that Mr. Secretary Thurloe being chosen to serve as a Member of Parliament for the University of Cambridge, for the town and borough of Wisbech, and for the borough of Huntingdon, he made choice to serve for the University of Cambridge, and waived the elections for the boroughs of Wisbech and Huntingdon. Thurloe was thus the first, and probably the only Member of Parliament that was ever returned actually for the borough of Wisbech. Secretary Thurloe was a liberal benefactor to the town, and the burgesses erected a gallery in the church for his use, (which was removed when the church was restored), also making him a capital burgess.

But despite Cromwell's influence and that of his Secretary of State in the borough, there were also said to be some strong sympathisers with Charles II., at Wisbech, who used to put a crumb in their wine and give the toast, having a double meaning, "May Providence send this *crum well* down!" Or, if anxious to drink the health of the deposed King, they would hold their glasses over a bowl of water on the table, and drink in discreet silence to the health of the King "over the water," meaning the exiled monarch in France. The time came when their wishes were realized, and at the Restoration, Wisbech Castle reverted to the See of Ely. It was subsequently occupied by the Southwell family for five terms of 21 years, altogether 105 years, the last occupant being Mr. Edward Southwell, an ancestor of the late Miss Trafford Southwell, the founder of the North Cambridgeshire Hospital. In 1792, power was given by Act of Parliament† for its sale, and it was purchased from Bishop Yorke (hence the name Yorke Row) for £2,245 by Mr. Joseph Medworth, who was educated as a charity boy in Wisbech Schools. He went to London as a bricklayer, and being successful in business, returned and purchased the Castle estate, erecting the Crescent upon it. The late Ald. Bays refers to Mr. Medworth's custom for many years, when his birthday came round, to treat the charity boys and girls to refreshments at the Castle, and to allow them to mount to the top

\* *Walker and Craddock's History of Wisbech* states that this portrait which represents Thurloe in his younger days, was copied by Mr. R. Browning, from an original in the possession of the Thurloe family at Norwich, and presented to the Museum by Daniel Gurney, of Runcton, near Lynn.

† 33 and 34, George III., c. 53.

balcony which afforded a good view of the town and neighbourhood. He offered to sell the Castle to the Corporation\* for a Grammar School for £2000, but they declined to purchase it, and it was said that Mr. Medworth, hearing that they hoped to acquire it at a lower price when he died, in a sudden pique determined to prevent this and pulled the handsome edifice down, erecting from the materials the present residence occupied by Mr. F. W. Bradley, as well as Castle Lodge, the property of Ald. Goward. It is, indeed, a matter of regret that Mr. Medworth's offer was not accepted, and Secretary Thurloe's handsome mansion preserved to the town. That it would have made an imposing Grammar School or Museum will be apparent from the illustration given, taken from a water-colour drawing by the late Mr. Algernon Peckover, of Sibald's Holme, who copied it from a sketch, which was made shortly before it was pulled down, by a member of his family. The ancient Norman Castle is depicted conventionally on the seals of the Governor of the Castle and of the Trinity Guild, no other representation being known to be in existence of the fortress dating from the time of William the Conqueror, than this heraldic design; whilst of the one built by Bishop Morton, there is nothing whatever to show its architectural features.

From the preceding description, it will be observed that four castles have been built at different periods:—

Description of Castle.	By Whom Built.	Probable Date.
Norman Fortress,	William I.,	About 1036
Resembling Haddon Hall,	Bishop Morton,	About 1480
Inigo Jones' Mansion,	Rt. Hon. Secretary Thurloe,	About 1660
Present building,	Mr. Joseph Medworth,	About 1815

Mr. Medworth also became the purchaser, from Mr. John Powell, of an estate connecting the Crescent with the Market Place, and uniform buildings were erected, thus enlarging the Crescent into what is more correctly described as a circus in shape. These alterations materially changed the aspect of the town, especially when Union Place, Ely Place, and Market Street were added. The Castle property, occupying the centre of the circus, was purchased in March, 1864, at a public auction held at Wisbech, by Mr. William Peckover, F.S.A., for £1,300, and is now the property of Mr. Alexander Peckover, LL.D., Lord-Lieutenant of

\* At that time there was also a proposal that the Grammar School should be pulled down, and a street made in continuation of Union Street, across the Horse Fair, to the Lynn Road, bridging the Canal, making a handsome town approach.

Cambridgeshire. The subterranean chambers of the Castle are supposed to have communicated originally with the vaults in Bridge Street, now used as wine-cellar by Mr. Charles Exley. After the demolition of the older buildings, several Roman earthen pipes, apparently once used for the conveyance of water, were found. The general plan of the ancient Castle can be seen from the curvature of the Crescent, Market Place, or buildings contiguous, with Castle Square and Museum Square as the site of the old draw-bridges. It is, indeed, scarcely more than a century since, that about half of the partially filled moat was built upon.

Among other relics of the ancient Castle of Cardinal Morton, which are preserved, are some fragments of ancient stained glass in the entrance hall of the present residence. There are also some medallions and ancient woodwork, and two obelisks, said to have been monuments to persons buried in the grounds. In the entrance hall of Mr. Bradley's residence is a modern tablet which bears the following statement :—

Wisbech Castle was founded by William the Conqueror, A.D. 1071. In 1236 it was, with part of the town, destroyed by an inundation of the sea. In the reign of Henry VII., it was rebuilt by Cardinal Morton, Bishop of Ely, and was in the reign of Elizabeth and James I. used as a prison. In 1656 it was the residence of the Right Hon. John Thurloe, Secretary of State, who in 1657 had a gallery built in the Parish Church of Wisbech for the occupier of the Castle.\* This mansion was also for many years occupied by the respectable family of Edward Southwell, Esq. The Constables of Wisbech Castle upon record are Thomas de Braunston, Matthias Taylor, and Lord John of Rochford; the two former are interred in Wisbech Church, the latter in the Parish Church of Walpole.

The Bishops of Ely used to make the Castle their residence when staying at Wisbech, and so late as 1668, the Corporation ordered the purchase of an ox, a wether sheep, and one calf to be brought to the Castle for the Bishop's table, a buck being also ordered from Exton Park, and half given to the Bishop.

Since the preceding portion of this chapter was in type, we have been favoured by Lady Colville, wife of Sir H. E. Colville, K.C.M.G., C.B., with the proof-sheets of a portion of a "History of the Colville family,"† giving some interesting information as to

\* This statement does not agree with *Watson's History of Wisbech*, which mentions that "in 1657, a gallery was erected in Wisbech Church, for Secretary Thurloe, at the expense of the Corporation."

† The original founder of this ancient family (which gives its name to the Colville Estate), Gilbert de Colville, came from Normandy to England, as a Commander in the army of William the Conqueror.

its famous ancestor. Allusion has been previously made to the fact that the official seal of Sir John Colville, Governor of Wisbech Castle in 1410, is in the possession of Colonel Sir H. E. Colville at his Lullington seat, near Burton-on-Trent, to whom we are indebted for an engraving, giving an exact representation of the Castle Seal, which we have reproduced. A beautifully illuminated MS. on vellum is also preserved there, containing the statutes given by Sir John Colville, founder of the College or Chantry at Newton, and a Papal Bull from the Pope Boniface IX., in cramped monkish Latin, relating to Sir John's proposed marriage. With reference to his foundation and endowment of Newton College or Chantry, the following is an extract from the History referred to:—

The vicinity of Wisbech Castle to his ancestral lands must have made it a convenient residence, at this time, (1411), when Sir John's thoughts were greatly taken up by the College or Chantry he was founding at Newton, and which he endowed with £40 a year. It was called the College of St. Mary Super-costeram-maris (by the sea coast), and maintained four chaplains, four clerks, and ten poor men. One of the chaplains who served the parish church had £5 6s. 8d. per annum, the others one hundred shillings, the clerks forty shillings and fourpence, and the poor men who lived in a house called the Bede House, sixpence per week each, and clothes. The first statutes given by the founder are dated June 18th, 1411, and according to these, prayers are to be made for the souls of the Founder, his wife and children; also for the souls of King Henry IV., and Joan his Queen, and their children. These statutes he reformed thirty-five years later. The original volume, a beautifully illuminated MS. on vellum, is still in possession of the family at Lullington. From the reference in it to Pope Boniface IX., who died in 1404, the wish to found this College had evidently been in St. John's mind for some years. No remains of this College exist, but the site is well authenticated, and lies a little to the west of and adjoining to the glebe land of the rectory, at a short distance from the old Roman bank. Being particularly excepted in the Act of Dissolution, I., Edward IV., the lands belonging to the College became annexed to the rectory of Newton. In 1426, Sir John was at Newton, for his will made in that year is dated there, and four years later, an Inquisition shows that he settled five messuages, 110 acres of land, in Newton, Leverington, Wisbech, Elm, and a fishery called Depewere, in Wisbech, on the Chantry at Newton. He was buried at Newton; and both his effigy and that of his wife were represented in the stained-glass window on the south side of Newton church, and were described in the Cole MS.

Two ancient brass helmets, which appear to have once been much decorated, and were in Newton church, indicating the burial place of the Colville family, are now in the possession of the family at Lullington.



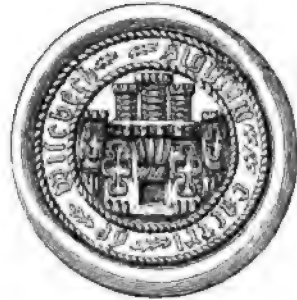
**WISBECH CASTLE.**

BUILT FOR SIR JOHN THURLOE, ELECTED M.P. FOR WISBECH, 1658 PULLED DOWN IN 1816.



**VAULTS UNDER WISBECH CASTLE.**

*From Photo by J. Kennerell.*



**SEAL OF TRINITY GUILD, 1379.**



**SEAL OF GOVERNOR OF WISBECH CASTLE  
(SIR JOHN COLVILLE), 1410.**

*From Engraving lent by Lady Colville.*





One of the older houses, Mote House, now occupied by Mrs. Frank Metcalfe, was built on the site of the ancient Mote Hall, and obtained its name, not from the Castle Moat, near to which convenience caused it to be placed, but from the local "Mote," which resembled the Court of Sewers, and administered drainage and other important interests. The same word, it may be remarked, appears in a compound form in Witenagemote. Nevertheless its existence, close to the ancient drawbridge and moat, reminds us of the time when the Castle precincts covered a much larger area and formed a conspicuous feature of the town. Within the ancient walls of the former Castles, King John, Oliver Cromwell, and possibly other notable historical characters,\* have found hospitable shelter, but it is a sad reflection, that in the dungeons or cells of this State ecclesiastical prison, the intolerant persecution of the dark ages should have destined many men of brilliant intellect and possible usefulness, to languish during long dreary years, not only in wearisome imprisonment, but awaiting, too often, ultimate martyrdom. It is a striking coincidence, and one that ought to be remembered in Wisbech history, that in the very same year, month, and on the identical day that two Wisbech martyrs, Wolsey and Pygott,†

\* In 1469, Edward IV., is said to have passed through Wisbech, with 200 horsemen, on his way to Crowland, and Charles I., trying to avoid the Parliamentary forces, was probably at Wisbech on his way from Oxford to Newark, travelling by "many crooked and bye-ways to escape the Parliamentary forces." *Watson's History of Wisbech.*

† In *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, folio edition, 3 vols., 1648, a copy of which is in the Wisbech Museum Library, a remarkably interesting account is given on page 360, of vol. iii, "of the burning of William Wolsey and Robert Pygott, martyrs," which took place at Ely, the prisoners, who were both residents at Wisbech, having been previously confined for some time in Wisbech Castle. The martyrdom is represented by a rude wood engraving, representing the Wisbech martyrs being burned at the stake. It took place on October 16th, 1555, in the very same year, month, and day, that Ridley and Latimer were victims of the same Papist intolerance, and suffered death at Oxford. On the very day, indeed, that Wolsey and Pygott were burnt at Ely, Latimer uttered the memorable words—"Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England, as I trust shall never be put out." The description of the death of the Wisbech martyrs (which is given in detail) may be briefly epitomized. It states that William Wolsey and Robert Pygott were, when arrested, "both dwelling in the town of Wisbitch." Wolsey had been a constable at Well (Upwell), but being deprived of his office by one of the Justices, removed to "Wisbitch." Dr. Fuller, the Chancellor of Ely, and John Christopherson, Dean of Norwich, charged him "to meddle no further with the Scriptures, than it did become such a layman as he was, to do." After conferring with him on religious questions, Wolsey was called to "the Sessions at Wisbitch, and was laid in the Castle there, thinking to him and all his friends that he should have suffered there at that present time, but it proved nothing so." Pygott, the painter, was there

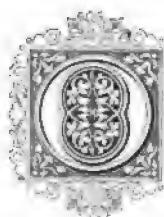
were burnt at the stake at Ely, by order of the Papist Chancellor of the diocese, Latimer and Ridley were also suffering a similar martyrdom at Oxford. It was on that very day that Bishop Latimer uttered the memorable words to his companion—"Be of good cheer, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." That "candle," which was thus lighted at Oxford by these heroic martyrs, and has never been put out, was also lighted at Ely, by Wisbech men, of humble origin, who have left behind them a testimony of unflinching fortitude, by suffering death at the stake, rather than deny their faith at the bidding of Papist persecutors.

But Wisbech Castle has also unfortunately witnessed the persecution of Papists, as well as Protestants, in the dark ages. Compared with those days of bigotry, the greater liberty of the nineteenth century presents an agreeable contrast. Over-looking the very ground where Protestant and Papist ad-

presented also by some evil disposed persons, for not coming to the church, and appeared before Sir Clement Hygham, the Judge, who "straightway commanded him to the jail, where Wolsey lay." So the Sessions being ended, Wolsey and Pygott were carried again to Ely into prison, where they both did remain till the day of their death." Their examination before Chancellor Fuller is described, and Wolsey's refusal to affirm "that the natural body and blood of Christ was not present really in the Sacrament," was brought against him, Pygott also stoutly declining to subscribe to such a belief. They were both condemned to die, and being brought to the place of execution at Ely, were bound with a chain to the stake. Wolsey's last declaration of faith was as follows:—"I take the eternal and everlasting God to witness, that I do err in no part or point of God's Book, the Holy Bible, but hold and believe in the same to be most firm and sound doctrine in all points most worthy for my salvation, and for all other Christians to the end of the world. Whatsoever mine adversaries report by me, God forgive them therefore." At the same time, numbers of New Testaments,— "a great sheet knit full of books"—were brought to be burned, and Wolsey asking for one, and Pygott desiring another, "they clasped them close to their breasts, saying the 106th Psalm, desiring all the people to say Amen, and so received the fire most thankfully." Wolsey is described as strong and vehement in his refusal to renounce his faith, whilst Pygott was of milder temperament, but was exhorted by his fellow sufferer, when his courage failed, to remain true to his Master. Wolsey, while in prison waiting for his "glad day," as he called his coming execution, sent to Richard Denton, smith, of Well, in the Isle of Ely, some money, adding that Denton was the first that delivered the Scriptures into his hands as the truth, and he marvelled that Denton tarried so long, desiring him to make haste to follow the same way as himself (Wolsey). But Denton receiving this message privately, nearly a year after, answered "I confess it is true, but alas I cannot burn." Nevertheless, at Well, a short time after, "his house was set on fire, and going in to save his goods, he lost his life, with that of two others that were in the same house." A copy of this very interesting page and illustration (to which no reference has apparently been made in previous local histories), is framed, and hung in the Savings Bank Room of the Wisbech Working Men's Institute.

herents suffered for conscience's sake, there have now arisen sanctuaries for Divine worship, representative of differing creeds, whose congregations may assemble without fear of molestation. When recalling such associations with Wisbech Castle, in those darker periods, the great changes that have taken place in three or four centuries, will be the more forcibly realised, and the enjoyment of those religious and civil liberties, that are to-day claimed as the right of every Englishman, will be the more fully appreciated.

## CHAPTER II.

WISBECH IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY  
AND ITS HISTORIANS.

ORIGINALLY, Wisbech was the grand outfall for the vast body of water brought down from the principal rivers of the district, and but for the diversion of the Great Ouse, some seventy years after King John's disaster, it is possible that it might have rivalled in importance much larger ports, whilst vessels of very considerable size would have been able to reach the town.\* Formerly, the rivers Nene and Ouse, known then as the Welle stream, descended from Littleport, through Upwell and Outwell, and thence by Elm, into the estuary, which was between the Mount Pleasant Bank and Hill House, Walsoken. At the time referred to, about the latter end of the thirteenth century, their diversion into the Little Ouse through Lynn took place. The residence of Thomas Mounpesson (who was attached for refusing to take his share in maintaining the bank of the Welle stream), which was on the site of the house now known as Mounpesson House, on the Elm Road, occupied by

\* Wisbech was anciently the grand outfall for all the vast aggregate of waters brought down from the rivers Grant, Ouse (which discharged the waters from ten counties into the North Sea, after having made a course of 160 miles), a considerable portion of the Nene, and several minor streams; it was also the great estuary by which the tides flowed into and up the several rivers. At this time, the haven of Lynn was but six poles wide, serving only to discharge the water coming down the Little Ouse or Brandon river, and the small rivers of Stoke, Setch, and Nar.  
*Watson's History of Wisbech.*

Mr. W. H. Copley, M.R.C.S., was situated on the left bank of the united rivers, and the Ferry Boat in Norfolk Street, Wisbech, was really a ferry across to the opposite bank at Hill House, Walsoken, (now known as the Mount, the residence of Mr. Alfred Cockett), at high water. Tradition also says that the stones used in the building of Walsoken Church were brought by the Welle stream from Barnack, near Stamford, to that point. The gully or sheep pond in Walsoken, was supposed to have been made by the sea water breaking through the Roman bank and overflowing that part.\*

The original town is believed to have been built between the two rivers, the Wyse, a little stream or "bec," from Guyhirne, and the Great Ouse, the large river from Littleport. The Wyse, in all probability, followed the course of the Horse Fair and the Canal until it met the Ouse, near the Ferry Boat, when both emptied into the estuary between Hill House and Mount Pleasant Bank, thence into the larger estuary between the Roman Bank which is near to Walsoken church and village, and its opposite one near to Leverington church and village.† It is probable that this was the natural state of things after the Roman banks were made, but when the Ouse was diverted from Littleport to Lynn, and Bishop Morton made his celebrated "Leam," thus diverting the Nene from Stanground to Guyhirn, it seems probable that the Wyse (possibly then called the Nene as the larger river), was extended from the old Canal sluice to the Horseshoe bend, where the sluice was erected across it, which cost £8,000, and only lasted seven days. The supposition that the ancient town was between those rivers, appears to be confirmed by the Old Market, why called "Old" seems puzzling, which did not contain such ancient buildings as evidently existed on the Nene Quay, or in High Street, and the Market Place.

\* Mr. J. T. Marshall, Tydd Gote, writes the following note as to the Wyse river:—"Hill Street, with its continuation by Church Terrace and Timber Market (now known as Norfolk Street East), would seem to have been the right and west or south-west margin of the Wyse, and the Lynn Road, or near it, its left and east or north-east one, there being no *banks*, properly speaking, as nature does not make them. Man made the one on the east or north-east side of the Lynn Road where the Eight Sail Mill is, and the old Four Post Windmill once was. The corner house on the Lynn Road, where it joins the road alongside Mount Pleasant to the Borough Cemetery, was where the Wyse debouched into the Ouse (the 'Welle stream'), until it was diverted from the old Canal Sluice to the Horseshoe, and probably called the Nene, as no doubt more water came by the Wyse, so that it became the principal river"

† The garden occupied by Mr. Ashton at the junction of Boyce's Lane with Norwich Road, is called Staithe Field, a name which suggests that a staithe or coal wharf may have been near there, on the side of the river.

That the river Wyse originally gave the name to the town is most probable, but the derivation has been a subject of much controversy. The Keltic *Wysg* became modified into Wis, whilst the second syllable was probably derived from the Saxon "bec," a stream, the name being thus literally interpreted—the Wysestream. Although the pronunciation of the terminal "beach," seems to suggest the proximity of the town to the sea, there is no justification for such a theory, and in Saxon times it was written "Wisebec," with a pronunciation as if it had been spelt "beck." In the reign of Edward III. it had become altered to "Wysebeche," and the great variety of ancient spellings in existence, show that sound, more than its derivation, was an important factor, the people of those days being unconsciously phonetic spellers. In *Fenland Past and Present*, by Messrs. S. H. Miller and S. B. J. Skertchley, we are told that in Dugdale, Wisbech occurs twenty-nine times, and Wisebeche thirty-six times, whilst in the case of tokens struck for the inhabitants of Wisbech, the mode of spelling is remarkably diverse, viz.: Wysebeche, Wisbich, Wisbidg, Wisbitch, Wisebeche, and Wisbech. The same variations are found to apply to some other places, as Holbeche, Waterbeche, and Langbeche. With regard to the name of the river Nene, it may be remarked that the Rev. John Davies, in his lecture on "Wisbech Antiquities," said that it was an old British name and is still traceable in Irish. He thought that it was probably given to the river because of the eagre, or tidal wave which came rushing along its channel from the sea when the tide began to flow. This eagre, some few years since, was occasionally seen, and at times was the cause of some damage to the small craft. Such a tidal wave, about two feet in height, was observed so recently as the 1st of March, 1896.

Until thirty years ago, the differing methods of spelling the name of the town, Wisbech or Wisbeach, were the source of inconvenience and sometimes of delay. The desirability of adopting a recognised and uniform spelling was urged in the local press, and debated by the Corporation, a resolution being passed in favour of adopting "Wisbech" without the "a," as the official method. In response to the request of the municipality, the railway and postal authorities, as well as other public officials, concurred in the expressed desire to obtain uniformity, and it has since become generally adopted, not only by the inhabitants, but in Post Office, railway and official documents. The exact spelling of a name may not seem a very important matter to some, but in the present day of rapid telegraphic and postal communications, when it is

most desirable to avoid mistakes and consequent delays, the authorities were naturally anxious to permanently settle the nomenclature of the borough.

There are some records of ancient buildings which link the present with the past, and to which a passing reference may be made. Mr. Mann Hutcheson, the Town Bailiff of a hundred years ago, who has chronicled some interesting facts that happened in his days, writes:—

In 1795, the only buildings now existing of notable antiquity are those in the Butchers' Row, conjectured to have been erected in the reign of King John, about 1200. There was in front of these ancient buildings, carved in wood, a representation of a man felling an ox, and some quaint devices, with an inscription in Saxon characters, though no word was left perfect but "Johnson."

Wisbech, like Stamford, was once famous for its annual "bull-running" through the streets, and the animal was generally let loose from a building just opposite to this row. The practice was, however, abolished about 1792, owing to the interposition of the Rev. Thos. Sheepshanks, Town Bailiff in 1786. The Rose and Crown, known as the Horn and Pheasant in 1475, is the oldest house of entertainment in the borough. Upon one of the outbuildings erected in 1601, to this day, may be seen the representation of a horn and pheasant on an iron plate let into the brickwork. The house, the scene of many notable local occurrences during the century, was for 38 years owned by the late Mr. William Tidnam, who came from the Belle Vue Hotel, Cromer, to succeed Mrs. Goddard. The hotel is now managed by his widow.

Early in the present century, in 1810, the Old Shire Hall and the Shambles at the eastern end of the Market Place were removed. The Shambles were erected in 1588, at a cost of £85. The pillory, used for public whippings, was on the roof of the Shire Hall, and the stocks' cage and whipping-post on the ground, in the rear of the building. The Shambles were built of wood, probably oak, the upper floor being used for the storage of corn or flour, and the covered space beneath, between the posts, entirely devoted to the sale of butcher's meat, in separate stalls or shops. The market women sold their poultry and eggs on planks and trestles placed opposite where Mr. Mehew's premises now are. When these buildings were removed, the Market Place and town was properly paved, but before that, High Street was destitute of cobbles or flags, and planks were often laid across to enable people to cross in wet weather. A pen-and-ink drawing



of the ancient Hall and Shambles has been made by Mr. R. B. Dawbarn, from information supplied to him by old inhabitants who are now deceased. This wooden erection of the sixteenth century is fully described in the lectures given by him on "Wisbech in the Days of our Grandfathers," printed in the succeeding chapter, in which much valuable information respecting Wisbech in the beginning of the century will be found. We give an illustration of this pen-and-ink drawing taken from Mr. Dawbarn's sketch in the Museum, and also one of the obelisk by Burgess, which replaced the old Market Cross that once occupied the western end of the Market Place. These market crosses were supposed to remind people of their religious obligations whilst transacting their daily business, and to inculcate uprightness of conduct in their dealings. It is thought to have been built by John de Feckenham, a prisoner in Wisbech Castle, who died in 1585, to whom reference has before been made. The cross was afterwards changed to an obelisk, which remained until April, 1811, and was removed by Mr. Pope, builder, about the same time as the Shambles, the late Ald. Bays remembering seeing a sailor climb to the top, a height of about 32 feet, and bring down an urn which surmounted it. For what reason this interesting pillar should have been removed is not known. The drawing by Burgess gives no indication of any inscription upon it, and it is only known that its pedestal was much blackened by the bonfires which, in those days, were kindled near its base, when public rejoicings took place. The Market Mews contain some quaint buildings with gabled ends, which remain to this day, although they have been somewhat modernised during recent years. A representation of this remnant of Old Wisbech, which has often been compared to the buildings of a Dutch town, has been thought worthy of a place among the views of Old Wisbech. King's Hall, which stood at the corner of Barton Lane was an Elizabethan house, which was removed early in the century, the engraving given of it being from a water-colour drawing by Mr. Algernon Peckover, copied from a painting by F. W. Watts, exhibited by Mr. Algernon Peckover in the Public Hall Exhibition of 1853, and now in the possession of Miss Peckover. We have not been able to trace the history of this Hall, nor the origin of its name. The North Brink, at one time, contained but few good houses, the majority being small cottages situated in close alleys or yards. The members of the Peckover family, all of whom reside on the North Brink, and other owners, have

materially changed its aspect by the erection of valuable residential property, during recent years.

A writer at the beginning of this century,\* describes the parish and neighbourhood of Wisbech as follows:—

The parish of Wisbech is about 12 miles long and 2½ miles wide, containing about 12,000 acres, which are very fertile and rich lands, bringing uncommonly large crops of grass and corn, viz.:—Wheat, oats, big barley, rape and mustard seed, hemp and flax. It was formerly noted for the excellence of the butter sent to the London market, but of late years the dairy has given way to grazing; and the lands are in so high a state of cultivation for the purpose, that few counties can vie with this in respect of the numbers and goodness of the cattle grazed in the neighbourhood. The sheep and oxen grow to a great size, and considerable numbers of them are sent twice every week to the London markets. There are frequent instances of the sheep being sold at Smithfield market at four guineas a head, after clip-day, and of the oxen reaching upwards of three hundred stone weight (London stone of eight pounds). There are also a great number of valuable horses bred on the farms around Wisbech. The population of Wisbech was then (1808) 4710, and the number of houses 940. The town was lighted with oil lamps,† and the only water supply was from wells, rain water cisterns, and the river. Every Wednesday and Saturday the magistrates assembled to settle the assize of bread—that was, to fix the price.

Such was the description given of the town and neighbourhood at the commencement of the century, when the population of Wisbech was one half of that of to day. It is unnecessary, however, to enter into fuller details from the fact that the local histories of Col. Watson, and of Messrs. Walker and Craddock have already dealt with this portion of Wisbech history. To these valuable records of the present century, we may make some reference, in the order in which they have appeared.

The first history of Wisbech is dated 1827, and was entitled *An Historical Account of the Ancient Town and Port of Wisbech, and of the circumjacent Towns and Villages*, by William Watson, F.A.S., High Bailiff of the Isle of Ely. It was published by H. and J. Leach, Wisbech. Mr. Watson was not a native of Wisbech, but in early life, was educated for the law, practising in co-partnership with a solicitor at Boston, Lincolnshire. He removed to Wisbech,

\* *Coske's Typographical and Statistical Description of Cambridgeshire*, 1808.

† Whale, seal or rape oil (rape or colseed, now called colza), rape seed being extensively grown in the neighbourhood. Mills for crushing it so as to obtain the oil, stood north of the Old Market, giving the name to "Oil Mill Lane." The public granary on the river side was also used, when first erected, as an Oil Mill for obtaining the oil from rape seed, and the bulk of the oil was sent to London in ships.

and abandoning the legal profession, became engaged in the brewery business. Unfortunately, he was induced to enter into a speculative banking enterprise, and opened an establishment in conjunction with Mr. Sneath, a branch of the family engaged in a similar enterprise at Boston. This connection terminated unhappily, the firm at Boston becoming bankrupt, and the Wisbech co-partners being involved in some of their transactions, were compelled to suspend their payments. The character of Mr. Watson stood exceedingly high, and time was given him to fulfil a promise to discharge his obligations. He also owned and worked the North Brink Brewery, and was subsequently able to fulfil his pledge, not only meeting his engagements, but paying, in addition, full interest for the time his creditors had waited. Subsequently, he was presented by his creditors with a handsome silver-gilt cup, as a recognition of his honour and integrity. In 1822, the Bishop of Ely made him High Bailiff of the Isle of Ely, and in the previous year, as well as in 1822, he was elected Town Bailiff by the Capital Burgesses for the unusual period in those days, of two years. He was also a Deputy Lieutenant. In 1807, Mr. Watson had been appointed Lieutenant Colonel Commandant of the Wisbech Volunteer Regiment of Infantry, and in 1808, on the formation of the Cambridgeshire Local Militia, under an Act of Parliament, he undertook the command of that force at a time when there was considerable apprehension of the possibility of an invasion during the *régime* of Napoleon I. It was somewhat late in life that he resolved to give his townsmen a history of their native place, when he was 56 years of age, and it was at considerable expense, incalculable labour, and, as it was said, to the injury of his health, that he accomplished his purpose. The work comprises about 700 pages, with nineteen engravings, and, at the present time, is becoming somewhat difficult to obtain. There is a neatly written MS. of Colonel Watson's history, apparently copied by a clerk, and with corrections in the compiler's own hand-writing (which belonged to the late Mr. Robert Dawbarn, J.P., and is now in the possession of Mr. J. H. Foster, North Brink,) in which Mr. Thomas Craddock, one of the authors of a subsequent history, has written a brief memoir of Mr. Watson, from which the following is extracted:—

It is not too much to say that the author accomplished every object which can be accomplished in so straitened a subject as local annals. His character was unblemished, and the celebrated eulogium of John Playfair, of Edinburgh, may, with all its eloquence, be applied to Mr. Watson. "He had all that could charm in society or attract in

private, and while his friends enjoyed the free and unstudied conversation of an easy and intelligent associate, they had at all times the proud and inward assurance that they might rely with the most explicit confidence upon his perfect honour and generosity."

Colonel Watson, died at Richmond, Surrey, on the 31st March, 1844, and was buried in Wisbech Church, where a white marble tablet, bearing an appropriate epitaph, perpetuates his memory.\* In his will, he bequeathed to the Capital Burgesses of Wisbech, in their corporate capacity, a sum of £1,000, towards establishing a Dispensary in Wisbech; a handsome sword presented to him by the Officers of the Wisbech Volunteer Regiment of Infantry, and the silver-gilt cup given to him by his creditors in 1819, in acknowledgment of his honourable conduct. The money and valuables were left to his widow for her life, and at her death, there appears to have been no money available to carry out the good intentions of the testator to benefit the poorer inhabitants. What has become of the sword and cup is not recorded.†

In 1833, *A History of Wisbech with an Historical Sketch of the Fens*, which was believed to have been compiled by Mr. Thos. Steed Watson, partly from Colonel Watson's History of Wisbech, and also from manuscripts which came into the author's possession, was published by Mr. Wm. Watts, who afterwards issued the *Wisbech Gazette* from an office in Bridge Street, now occupied by Mr. Charles Exley.

It is forty-seven years, viz., in 1849, since the *History*

\* His only daughter, Mrs. John Maule, wife of a Huntingdon solicitor, died at Wisbech on January 27th, 1866, at the age of 67.

† The following is the extract from Colonel Watson's will, as it is recorded at Doctor's Commons:—"And whereas in the course of my life I have had (undeserving as I feel of such marks of regard) the satisfaction of receiving certain very friendly tokens of respect from those with whom I had the pleasure of acting in public life, one of which is a handsome sword, presented to me by the Officers of the Wisbech Volunteer Regiment of Infantry, which I had the honour to command as Lieutenant Colonel Commandant, in the year 1808; and the other is a splendid golden cup, presented to me in the year 1819, both of which I give to my wife for her life, and after her death, I give the said sword and cup to the Capital Burgesses of Wisbech in their corporate capacity, to be preserved amongst their valuables, as a mark of my respect to the inhabitants of the town where I received such courtesies; and I direct that my trustees shall, after my wife's decease, raise out of my personal estate the sum of one thousand pounds, either towards forming a fund to establish a Dispensary within the town of Wisbech St. Peter, for the benefit of the poor inhabitants thereof, or in case such institution shall be already established before, such sum of one thousand pounds shall become payable, then that the same shall be paid in aid of the funds then raised for such benevolent purpose."

of *Wisbech and the Fens*, of which the joint authorship was undertaken by Mr. Neil Walker and Mr. Thos. Craddock, B.A., was published by Mr. Richard Walker, a son of the author, whose business premises were then at the foot of the Stone Bridge, near the Butter Cross, which stood opposite where the Post Office now is. This work was first issued in parts, and afterwards in a complete volume. Some years later, a testimonial fund was presented to Mr. Neil Walker in recognition of his literary abilities. He died in 1864, at the age of 87. Mr. Thomas Craddock subsequently became Professor of Literature at Queen's College, Liverpool, and published several works of general interest.\* During his residence in Wisbech, he was associated with the late Mr. Samuel Smith, and Mr. Edward Johnson, in utilising photography for the purpose of preserving the more conspicuous features of the town of that day. An excellent collection of these views, many from negatives in the possession of Mr. Robert Bennett, is preserved in the Museum Library, and testifies to the skill and industry of these early amateur photographers. The copyright of this history, (with the sheets, extending to 564 pages, and 18 steel plates) were subsequently purchased by Mr. John Gardiner, by whom, and by his successor, this work has since been issued, and it is likely to remain in print for some years longer.

The present work completes the history of the town to the present time, and although it does not claim to be ranked with the abler efforts that have preceded it, a useful purpose may have been accomplished, if its publication should be the means of preserving and handing down to posterity many valuable records of the receding past, or if it should inform the rising generation of vicissitudes through which the borough has passed, which might otherwise be lost to sight unless at the expense of much trouble and research.

Wisbech has sometimes been described as the capital of the Fens, and even if it does not altogether aspire to such a pretentious title, it certainly has a stronger claim than some others that have assumed it. It is the central town of the Fen district, a municipal borough of antiquity, and a seaport of importance. The

\* Amongst other works which he published was the "Life of Charles Lamb," which was printed at the private printing press of the late Mr. William Dawbarn, of Elmswood, Liverpool, with whom he was on intimate terms. He died at Liverpool, April 9th, 1893, aged 82, leaving a "Life of Coleridge," which it was not thought desirable to publish, as another was already in the press. His nephew, Mr. William Craddock Phillips, is one of the directors of English Brothers, Limited, of Wisbech and Peterborough.

Fenland comprises an area extending from Quy, 5 miles E.N.E. of Cambridge to Lincoln, in length about 73 miles, and from near Peterborough to Brandon, Suffolk, about 36 miles. It occupies considerable portions of the six counties of Cambridge, Norfolk, Suffolk, Huntingdon, Northampton and Lincoln, with an area of 1306 square miles. Such is the definition given in Mr. S. H. Miller's *Handbook to the Fenland*, a useful guide to the tourist or student. "The summer and autumn," we are told in the work to which we have referred, "are often very delightful. Good orchards abound in some parts, corn in all its variety is abundant, seed crops, mustard, rape, turnips and mangolds are plentiful, a large acreage is generally devoted to mustard, which in bloom gives a richness to the scene; in fact all that ordinarily sustains man and beast is here produced in great plenty, and though the land is not diversified by hill and dale, there is a compensation in the brilliancy of the sky, the visibility of the air, and the gorgeous hues of the landscape, phenomena which are not surpassed in these realms."

A few facts respecting the present status of the town may fittingly form a part of this chapter. Wisbech, is next to Cambridge, the most important corporate and market town in Cambridgeshire, giving its name to the Northern Division of the County which has its own Parliamentary representative. It is the centre of a Parochial Union, composed of 22 parishes; Quarter Sessions are held in the borough alternately with Ely, and a district County Court sits periodically. Its geographical position is about 90 miles north of London, 40 from Cambridge, and 20 east from Peterborough. It is situated on the Nene, a dozen miles above its outfall into the estuary called the Wash, and is a port, the river allowing of the navigation of steamers of 700 to 800 tons, and 220 to 245 feet in length. The chief imports are Baltic timber, oats, barley and maize, iron and coal. The town is bisected by the river Nene, the larger part lying on the south bank, and there is a canal which supplies water connection between the Nene and the Ouse. For municipal purposes the borough is divided into two wards, north and south, and is governed by six aldermen and eighteen town councillors, presided over by a Mayor, who is a County and Borough Justice so long as he holds that office, and as ex-mayor, a Borough Justice for one year. Wisbech sends six representatives (one each for the same number of wards or divisions) to the Isle of Ely County Council, which is distinct from that of Cambridgeshire, the ancient jurisdiction of the Isle of Ely having been retained. The County

Council holds its quarterly and committee meetings at March Temperance Hall, situated in the centre of an agricultural and fruit growing district. The principal factory is that for making corn-dressing machines, founded and developed by Mr. John Baker, who sends a large number of machines to distant countries. There are extensive timber-yards, sawing and planing mills, belonging to Messrs. English Brothers, Limited; Ropkins and Co., Limited; Stanley and Co., and other firms; steam mills for flour grinding, and one for the manufacture of oil cake. There are also breweries, implement stores, printing works and roperies. Fruit is very largely grown in the surrounding districts and employs a large amount of labour from the neighbourhood, as well as hands from London in the season. It is chiefly dispatched to the Metropolis and North of England markets, and comprises gooseberries, strawberries, apples and plums. Potatoes, asparagus, cauliflowers, and other vegetables are also produced.

Including New Walsoken, which is a closely connected suburb, and with which it is allied for main drainage purposes, as well as in its gas and water supply, the population of Wisbech may be considered to be between 12,000 and 13,000, over a thousand more than in 1841. The actual population of the parish of Wisbech in 1891 was 9395, and of Walsoken 2771. Two centuries ago, about the time when Secretary Thurloe was chosen to represent Parliament, the population was only 1700.\* At the beginning of the present century it had increased to 4710, and in 1821 to 6515. From the preceding statistics, it will be observed that the population of the town has doubled since the commencement of the century, notwithstanding the agricultural depression which has prevailed in the surrounding district for many years.

There are indications that this healthy development and growth are still maintained. The new houses that have sprung into existence in the borough, furnish evidence of a probable increase of population in proportion to the extended area of the town. In subsequent chapters, it will be shown that improvements have been undertaken to meet this growth, and that though the rates to provide for these progressive works have undergone expansion, yet the advantages thus obtained have materially contributed to the health and general welfare of the borough and neighbourhood during the later portion of the present century.

\* On a census taken in 1676, the number of inhabitants was 1705.—*Watson's History of Wisbech.*

## CHAPTER III.

## "WISBECH IN THE DAYS OF OUR GRANDFATHERS,"

## AND DESCRIPTION OF BANK HOUSE.



WO lectures given in the early part of 1891, by the late Mr. R. B. Dawbarn (whose death took place in April, 1896) entitled "Wisbech in the Days of our Grandfathers," contain an admirable epitome of local history during the last 150 years, and are worthy of preservation in a more permanent form than the reports which appeared at the time in the local journals. Probably the last literary work that Mr. Dawbarn undertook before his decease was the revision of the notes of these lectures with a view to their publication in this volume, but before the proofs could be submitted to him, he had passed away. An important addition has since been made, which will make them still more complete. Mr. Dawbarn, at the close of his second lecture (which was delivered at an Art Exhibition, held in the Lecture Room of the Public Hall) remarked that a description of Bank House, on the North Brink, the residence of the Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, giving particulars of its construction, and its internal decorations—especially its beautiful wood carvings—together with the unique collection of valuable books it contains, would be of great interest. The owner of Bank House, Mr. Alexander Peckover, LL.D., F.S.A., has kindly complied with a suggestion made by the author to contribute such a paper, descriptive of one of the most substantially and well-built houses of Wisbech, which has remained very nearly in its original



state, as it was when built 174 years since. Mr. Peckover, whose portrait we give in another place, writes:—

Bank House was built in 1722 upon the site of a former, or rather of two former houses, the floors of which were discovered when, some years ago, gas and water were laid down in the basement storey. The only visible portion existing of these prior buildings is a curious arched passage leading to the river, the floor of which being lower than that of the present cellars, evidently preceded them. This passage has an arched roof, and is about seven feet in height. Some years since, when the sewerage was being laid along the North Brink the passage was discovered in perfect condition. The main drain was carried underneath it. It is now built up a few feet from the house. What its purpose was is a matter for conjecture.

The house is of yellow brick faced with red. It is provided with a staircase to the roof, which has broad leaden gutters resembling walks, from which sixty years ago the Cathedrals of Ely and Peterborough, the Abbeys of Crowland and Thorney, Boston Stump, Whittlesea Church, Dersingham Heath, and the Hills near Bourne could be seen, but now are all hidden by trees.

In the reign of George II., the house was owned by a Baronet of the Southwell family, whose Lady was anxious for its adornment, but as her husband felt it was too expensive a matter, she applied to her father, who was both wealthy and liberal, and he sent her several thousand pounds to enable her to carry out her wishes. She employed some celebrated woodcarvers, who, tradition states, had been working at Houghton Hall in Norfolk, and are supposed to have been of French origin. The dining room was left untouched, retaining its Queen Anne character, but the hall and staircase and the landing above, together with the bedrooms on the first floor, were decorated. The best work was reserved for the library and drawing room, in both of which the carvings are remarkably graceful and artistic. The eagle over the mantelpiece in the latter room, holding in its beak festoons of drapery, flowers, and fruit, has attracted much attention. Sir Henry Cole when he saw it, expressed himself as devoured with envy, and offered a large sum for its purchase by the South Kensington Museum, in addition to a plaster cast to take the place of the original! The wood is Weimar pine, painted white, and although deeply undercut and of delicate workmanship, is still nearly perfect.

The present owner, about twenty years ago, took down the old wings of the house, rebuilding them with offices on one side, and a new library on the other, this room being approached through the old library. The most serious difficulty met with was to make a new doorway similar to the other two in the old library. One of the most skilful carvers in England was employed, but good as his work is, it is not considered by judges to equal the two earlier door cases.

The new library is 52 feet by 21, and contains several collections of special subjects, that of early atlases and maps



**THE NORTH BRINK,**  
 SHOWING BANK HOUSE, THE RESIDENCE OF THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE,  
 (ALEXANDER PECKOVER, Esq., LL.D.).



**THE MARKET PLACE.**  
*From Photo by Ponlton & Son.*

THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
ASTOR LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATION

being one of the most extensive. The early editions of Ptolemy are mostly to be found there, as well as the rare Lafreri, Ortelius Hondius, &c. Early printing is represented by Gutenberg, Schæffer, Meutelin, Ulric Zell, Sweinheim, Jenson, Aldus and others; while Caxton, W. de Worde, Madinia, Julian Notary, Pynson, P. de Treveris, &c., remind us of our own country. Many of these early books possess woodcuts, in addition to which may be found portfolios containing specimens of most of the celebrated artists on wood, up to the present day, in which Albrecht Durer figures prominently. There is also a collection of all the 12 received versions of the English Bible, commencing with the extremely rare Tyndale Testament of 1534. The Coverdale Bible of 1537 is there, and first editions of all the other versions. It has taken many years to obtain fine copies of this series. Another group is of the earliest printed Greek Testaments, some of great rarity. A feature of the library is the number of books printed upon vellum, from the 15th century to the memorials of S. Guthlac, printed by our townsman, Mr. Leach.

But perhaps the most interesting are the manuscripts, numbering over 50. A "Greek Gospels" of about 900, and a Greek Testament of about 1100 are recognised as codices. There is a "Latin Gospels" of about 950, and many others in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Ethiopian, Sanscrit, &c. Some are of great beauty. One Book of Hours has in it the handwriting of Margaret, the mother of Henry VII., and the patroness of the Colleges of St. John's and Christ's at Cambridge, stating that she gives the book to "my good Lady Shirley." It is elaborately illuminated throughout, and contains miniature paintings of singular delicacy and beauty. It is in the most perfect state, on the purest vellum, and as clean as when the Lady Margaret gave it to her friend.

A second library has recently been added on the other side of the house looking into the garden. The mantelpiece is a fine example of carving by our townsman Mr. M. G. Strapps, after the design of Mr. J. D. Penrose, Mr. Peckover's artistic son-in-law.

The garden contains some curious trees, among them the Maidenhair tree, one of the largest in England, planted by Mr. Peckover's grandfather about 100 years ago, and hardy palms which flower every year, one about 15 feet in height. In the orange house is a tree bearing sweet oranges, purchased at the famous sale at Hagbeach Hall, and at least 200 years old.

The old Norman White Cross of the Lowe, rescued from the river's bed, has here been re-erected.

The Friends' Burial Ground adjoins. Here lies the body of Jane Stuart, a daughter of James II., who joined the Society of Friends at Wisbech, and whose interesting history has been several times printed. The grave is marked by box edging, and letters, viz., J.S., aged 88, died 1742. It has been carefully preserved for more than 150 years.\*

\* A more detailed reference to the history of Jane Stuart will be found in the notice of the Society of Friends and their Meeting House on the North Brink.

The earlier lectures of Mr. Dawbarn which were delivered in the Park Hall to members of the Hill Street Mutual Improvement Society, were illustrated by a collection of water-colour drawings, engravings, and photographs of Wisbech, some from the lecturer's possession, others from the Wisbech Museum and various sources.\*

Mr. Dawbarn said that his aim was to group together certain facts, accompanied by running comments, in such a way that they could obtain a picture of the period, and realize fairly for themselves the condition and circumstances of their forefathers. The date chosen was as far back as the memory of man extended. If those present profited by being enabled to compare the past with the present his aim would be successful. He chose the year 1756, four years before the accession of George II., as his starting point, not arbitrarily, but just because that was the first date at which he could get anything like reliable pictorial information as to the appearance of the town. After personal search at the British Museum and elsewhere, he could find no views except Dr. Massey's two prints and Burgess's print of Wisbech church drawn in 1797, and practically of the same date. Besides, there was an architectural elevation of the stone bridge, as it was engraved for the designer in the British Museum, and of which

\* It may be useful to place on record a complete list of the collection which was brought together by the lecturer to elucidate his subject:—

PHOTOGRAPHS of the old Butter Cross, with fire-engine house, Mr. R. Walker's house and shop, and other adjacent houses now pulled down; the Corn Hill and North Brink; the Stone Bridge from various points of view; these photographs being taken by Messrs. Craddock, Saml. Smith, and Edwd. Johnson, about the year 1852. Also a number of interesting photographs showing houses lately removed, including old porch in Church Terrace, near the Duke's Head Inn; Mr. Abraham Usill's house; the site of the present Post Office, White Lion Hotel, and old houses in High Street. Amongst existing houses were photographs of the late Mr. Bays' house in Hill Street; the Market Mews, opposite the *Advertiser Office*; and premises belonging to Mr. Rust, in Ship Passage, showing the ancient "Market Arch." Photograph by Mr. E. Johnson, of the old Red Engine Mill, Leverington Road, recently removed. An autotype of the old Stone Bridge by the late Mr. Arthur Adams, son of Mr. William Adams, architect.

PRINTS.—Three of Dr. Massey's prints of Wisbech from the Old Roman Bank and from the North Brink in 1756. Two lithographed views by Hunter of the Port of Wisbech and the Brinks in 1840. Burgess's print of Wisbech Church 1797, showing back elevation of Wisbech Castle. In addition to the above there were four views of the ancient halls of this neighbourhood, three of which have been taken down, viz.: Dunton, Newton, and Hagbech—also a view of Beaupré Hall, still in existence, in its ancient state.

ORIGINAL WATER COLOUR DRAWINGS.—Two large drawings of Wisbech Castle (which was pulled down in 1816), the work of Mr. R. B. Dawbarn and used for his lecture before the British Archaeological Society in 1878; Indian Ink drawing of the Obelisk in the Market Place (taken down in 1810) by Burgess; water colour drawings of King's Hall at the corner of Barton Road, and a view of the Friends' Meeting House and old houses now removed on the North Brink, both painted by Mr. Alg. Peckover. A garden view of Wisbech Castle by the late Mrs. Shewell; old gabled house, corner of Market Place, next Union Street, about 1868, painted by Miss K. F. Dawbarn; Baptist Meeting House and old Cottages, pulled down in 1857, in Hill Street; view of existing Unitarian Chapel in Great Church Street from burial ground behind, both painted by Mr. R. B. Dawbarn; Post Windmill on the Lynn Road (now removed) also by Mr. R. B. Dawbarn.

they had an Indian ink copy in their own Museum in the town. Judging from the view of the River Bank showing the town as seen from the corner of Mount Pleasant—it would appear that there were few, if any, houses on either of the banks of the river. Nene Parade and West Parade did not exist, one or two wind mills only surviving to our own day. Eastfield was non-existent, and that plot wherein he and the audience were then located, formerly known as "The Garden," lying between Trafalgar Row and the Park, comprising Monica Road, Agenoria Street, Henry and Whitby Streets, was unbuilt. It was unnecessary to say that the same remark applied to the houses on the other side of the Park, because the Park itself and roads adjacent had been made so recently. Neither would New Walsoken have been found on any map of the period, save, perhaps a scattered house or two; nor New Wisbech, The Crescent, York Row, Market Street, and Castle Mews. That statement was not merely inferred from the print to which he had alluded, but was confirmed by Wood's map of 1830. He could fancy he heard some say "What a small place was Wisbech then." And so it was, for the population in 1790 was only 4,710. But, on the other hand, Wisbech then was relatively much larger and more important than it is to-day, as he would be able to prove to them. London in 1770 was supposed to have 650,000 inhabitants—being smaller than Manchester, Liverpool, or Glasgow of to-day; whereas now the larger London is estimated to contain 5,000,000, or 4,000,000 in its smaller area. All the provincial towns were much smaller than now. Proportionately and relatively, Wisbech was decidedly larger and of more consequence than now. It was the Metropolis of North Cambridgeshire and parts of the Fens of Norfolk and Cambridgeshire; an assize and race town, and also important in respect to its trade by water. The town, a century back, was considered somewhat Dutch in its appearance, and was admired by strangers. An interesting reference to it is quoted in *Cole's MSS.* in the British Museum from *A Short Tour in the Midland Counties in 1772*, p. 105. The writer says "A considerable trade is carried on here by means of the river, though barges and small sloops alone can get up; the larger vessels stopping at Cross Keys' Washway (Sutton Bridge or at the Foul Anchor) about six miles below. Much corn is shipped and a considerable quantity of oil, there being several (I think seven) mills at this town for pressing it from the seed. The buildings are in general handsome, the inn we stayed at uncommonly so. The Market Place is ornamented with an obelisk, but the bridge stretching Rialto-like over this straight and considerable stream with a row of good houses extending from it, and fronting the water to a considerable distance, beats all, and exhibits something of a Venetian appearance, especially if you view it from the London entrance. This vast arch is modern, is about 76 feet span, of stone, and crowned with a handsome balustrade and lamps." If, the lecturer remarked, the above praise appeared undue, it should be remembered that the writer judged the place from then existing country towns. The prestige

and importance of the town was seriously reduced by the departure from the neighbourhood of the resident gentry to better drained and prettier spots. For instance, Dunton Hall (the seat of Sir Clement Trafford), Colville House, Newton (the seat of the Colville family), Hagbech (Emneth) Sir Hy. Peyton's seat; and Needham, had all changed hands and been pulled down. Beaupré Hall alone was standing, but at this time deserted. The departure of the Southwell family from the Castle was also injurious to Wisbech. In order to form a just comparison of the Wisbech of 1760-1800 with the town of to-day, the lecturer passed in review the public and private buildings of the town, classifying them under three heads. First, let them look at the buildings that had been destroyed, and their materials taken away; secondly, those that were left so much in their ancient condition that their original appearance could be readily guessed; thirdly, the buildings, ancient, but which had been more or less modernised. First, then, the buildings that had disappeared. Foremost amongst these was a Wood Bridge (shown in Dr. Massey's view of the Brinks). Dr. Massey was a resident doctor with some public spirit and a taste for art, which induced him, at his own expense, to perpetuate by copper-plate engravings the appearance of the borough of his day. There was nothing in the wooden bridge, either in its antiquity, its design, or construction, that makes its removal a cause of regret. Its stone successor was indeed justly worthy of admiration and of all the praise that had been bestowed upon it. It must be confessed that it was, from its steepness and the narrowness of the roadway, very inconvenient for traffic. As an instance of this inconvenience, the lecturer remembered that whenever Wombwell's Menagerie visited the town it was necessary to elevate the largest elephant van by jacks so that its wheels could pass over the raised footpaths on each side of the roadway. It was nevertheless with its airy elliptical curve, graceful in design and beautiful in construction; a grievous loss artistically to the town when it gave way to the present most useful but ugly piece of engineering. Three meeting houses of the old Non-conformists were among the noteworthy structures which had disappeared. First, there was the Presbyterian Chapel, Hill Street, which stood in the yard at the back of the Standard Inn, on the site of which a brewery was erected some forty years ago. Then there was the General Baptist Chapel in Place's Yard, on the site of which is the Soup Kitchen, and the Friends' Meeting House on the North Brink, a quaint thatched old building with casements dating apparently from the days of George Fox. Coming to the more pretentious buildings, there was the Castle. This, although a mere private dwelling, was a lineal descendant of the fortress built by William the Conqueror, rebuilt by Cardinal Morton, lodged in by King John, and dismantled by Oliver Cromwell. It was a gentleman's house, substantially built according to the taste of the times. Inigo Jones, the great architect, was said to be its designer. It resembled in appearance many houses of the period—for example Orton Hall, near Peterborough, and Coleshill in Berkshire. The

Castle, with its extensive gardens, stood on the site of the present Crescent, Union Place, Ely Place, and part of Market Street, and went back towards Love Lane, and almost up to Deadman's Lane. The building was placed on the terrace elevated by arches still existing. Its chief front overlooked Castle Square, and faced the river. The moat at that time was imperfectly filled and could be distinctly traced for much of its course, some of the water being left in Deadman's Pond and pits in the Vicarage grounds filled up some 25 years ago. At the time of which he spoke he believed there was some water lying in hollows in Castle Square where the Chapel stands. The house had some very roomy panelled apartments, with beautiful embossed leather hangings in one or more of them, and a balustraded look-out turret and flagstaff. The late Mr. Bays recollected that the charity boys on the King's birthday were allowed by Mr. Medworth to ascend the turret, and no doubt cheer lustily, each receiving before he departed a glass of wine and a piece of plum cake according to the hospitable notions of that time. The first meeting of the proposed Isle of Ely Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society was held in the Castle, at which the general organization and election of officers was discussed, and, it may be, settled. The house was taken down in 1816. It had been for many years the family residence of the Southwells, of whom Miss Trafford Southwell, the foundress of the North Cambs. Cottage Hospital was a lineal descendant. The wealth and culture of the family are to be inferred from the costliness and elegance of the monuments to be seen in Wisbech Church and Westminster Abbey. In the former is one, a beautiful figure of Hope from the chisel of Nollekens, and in the latter is a group entitled Charity by—if he remembered rightly—the sculptor Chantrey. On the latter monument, special mention is made of Wisbech as the residence of the Southwells. The late vicarage is said to have been comfortable and unpretentious, whitewashed like a farm-house. Colville House, at the bottom of Great Church Street, and Mr. Abraham Usill's house (on the site of the present Post Office) were both substantial old houses, with good rooms, and broad massive staircases. King's Hall, which stood at the corner of Barton Lane and the North Brink was a house of marked Elizabethan character; there was also Queen Kirton's, a dwelling with a quaint projecting hood over the door. Schoolboy tradition ascribed great eccentricity to its occupant, who dressed in a most fantastic manner. Her face, it was alleged, was anointed with train oil, and now and then decorated by a stray gnat sticking to her nose. Two interesting gabled and thatched tenements, the windows filled with lead lights, deserved passing notice. One of these was a public house called the Sailor's Return. A penthouse roof ran over the front doors and windows of the living rooms. Upstairs in the roof of one of these dwellings existed a dark chamber or cell, approached by a trap-door. In the floor was an iron ring, and this appeared to point to the prevailing custom, in bygone days, of confining the insane—when troublesome—in dark holes, leaving them in solitude to drag out a miserable existence,



lost in squalid filth and wretchedness. Further down, on the site of the present Corn Exchange, was the Nag's Head. A fine old carved Tudor porch belonging to this hotel was much admired by Coles on his visit to the town. Coming to the Market Place, was a gabled house, removed about 1870, occupied for many years, first by the Adams' family, and afterwards by the Hudson family, and the dwellings inhabited by Messrs. Lane and Beckbessenger, which were destroyed by fire about 1885. There were some remains of interest in them in the high roofs and moulded brick architraves round the windows. Among the neighbouring houses were Dr. Hardwicke's, on the site of Mr. Crabtree's shop, and King John's almshouses and dwellings adjoining (facing Mr. Gromitt's house), which had also gone. The present Sessions House was built on the spot formerly occupied by Sturmy's almshouses. The White Lion (Temperance Hotel) was once a good representative specimen of a hostelry of the Tudor time; half-timbered and originally with wood mullioned casement windows. A most interesting discovery was made in 1883, when the front portion of the house was pulled down, of the large old chimney and the wide open-breasted fireplace where generations of bygone Wisbechians had sat and smoked their pipes. By the sides of the fireplace were found the ancient lockers in which the smokers were accustomed to place their old-fashioned "church-warden" pipes. There was also discovered in the floor above, what is known in church steeples as a turnpike-stair, worked in the brickwork of the chimney—leading up to the dormitory above, by which the guests remaining in the house for a night, or later arrivals, could ascend to the spacious sleeping apartment above head without disturbing the rest of the occupants of the house. Two hundred years ago our forefathers bore overcrowding in living and sleeping rooms more patiently than we. They were not so fastidious; when 20 and 30 people arrived at an inn and had to scramble and "pig" together in one room they did not grumble. On the Market Place was the old Shire Hall, pulled down in 1810. This was a one-storied rectangular building, with a semi-octagon end. The principal door was in the centre division with a semi-circular headed window on each side. Its front faced Messrs. Dowson's, and a side door opening on the bench towards the Ship Inn, provided a private entrance for the judge. It was covered with a flat lead roof, on which stood the pillory. In this were placed, more especially, those who offended "the powers that be" by the outspokenness of their criticisms. Literary men and journalists were peculiarly exposed to this punishment. He was afraid their friend, Mr. Gardiner, would have stood a good chance, had he lived then, of being placed there for some of his criticisms on public matters, but for himself he would promise he would not have been one to pelt him; and such was the respect generally entertained for Mr. Gardiner, he believed, beyond the weariness of such long standing, the penalty would have been light. Behind, on the ground, were the cage—or lock up—and stocks. In the rear of the Hall stood the venerable shambles, erected in 1692, in common occupation as butchers' shops or

stalls. Then there was the obelisk, with its pedestal, measuring 32 feet in height, facing Messrs. Dowson's front door. There was only one drawing of it, the one exhibited, borrowed from the Museum, and done by Mr. Burgess. The obelisk was said to be very much blackened on one side by repeated bonfires which were made near to it. It was placed in succession to an old Market Cross,\* and does not appear to have borne an inscription, or to have been designed as a memorial of any kind. The Customs House and Butter Cross was a very useful and respectable looking building, perhaps more convenient for the general purposes than buildings remaining in present use. Upstairs was the magistrates' court, the borough surveyor's and customs' offices, and the savings' bank with a market for butter and poultry underneath. The police office and cells occupied the lower floor at the end next the bridge. Besides the buildings he had enumerated, there were windmills that had been pulled down. One was on the river bank, shown in the view of 1756, and only removed 30 years or so since, and one at the end of Upper Hill Street where Mrs. Hampson's house now stands. Another was taken bodily from opposite to the Horseshoe Corner, and removed to a spot facing the Black Bear at Walsoken, where it is now occupied by Mr. Leach. Mr. Robert Dawbarn, senr., remembered its transport—in a sort of triumphal march—on two waggons abreast,—for the passage of which it was necessary to take down the Lynn Road toll-bar—to its present site, where it was deposited on a brick base duly provided for it. To these must be added the Old Post Mill, near to the Clarkson Inn, and the Red Engine Mill on the Leverington Road; both of which have only very recently been taken down. Next, as to old buildings remaining and comparatively little altered. The parish church of St. Peter's, which was in this class, he had no time to remark upon. The Grammar School had no doubt, in an antiquarian's point of view, suffered seriously about that time. Mr. Jeremiah Jackson required more dormitory accommodation for the increasing number of boarders under his tuition, and the old open timbered roof,

\* Little is known definitely as to this cross. Dr. Sparrow Simpson, sub-dean of St. Paul's, in a volume, published as recently as 1894, on *St. Paul's Cathedral and Old City Life*, refers at some length to John de Feckenham, promoted by Queen Mary from the deanery of St. Paul's to the Abbey of Westminster, and who was confined as a Papist by Elizabeth in Wisbech Castle where he died in 1585. He is credited with erecting, at his own cost, a cross at Wisbech. Crosses were far from uncommon erections at that time, and the question is, in what part of the town was it set up? Colonel Watson says "Originally there was a market cross of which the reparation is mentioned in 1549." It appears that in that year the Market Place was paved with ragstone which Colonel Watson thinks must very quickly have been taken up, for in 1570 the Market Place was raised by soil brought from the river bank between Crabbe Marsh and Elm Leam. This elevation of the ground level must necessarily have greatly marred whatever architectural merit the cross possessed, by an extensive burying of the steps on which such structures were usually elevated. If, in addition to this æsthetic injury, the cross was considerably decayed—the repairs of 1549 being only a superficial patchwork,—it would very naturally occur to John de Feckenham, when resolved on erecting a cross somewhere in the town, to rebuild it. But whether this were so, or not, it was doomed at an early date to make way for the obelisk referred to.

probably already greatly injured by ignorant carpenters, was taken off. Prior to this alteration the schoolroom, no doubt, presented a similar appearance to the halls of the larger English houses in Tudor times. The original basement of the Old Gaol remained, and the part at one end which had been since curtailed; the Unitarian Chapel is still standing, but it belonged then to the Particular Baptists, who now worship in the Hill Street Chapel. On the North Brink, Bank House was a very fine old residence of the period of Ann or the early Georges, containing handsome panelled apartments with fine carved Chippendale mantelpieces. Mr. E. H. Jackson's dwelling—almost the only stone-fronted house in the town—was seen from the print referred to, to be externally almost unaltered. Then there was the house occupied by Mr. Bowker on the South Brink, which, although it had suffered the loss of its dormer windows and lead lights with a change of its original roof covering, still in its general character presented its ancient appearance. The block now in the occupation of Mrs. Gardiner and her neighbours, Miss Goward and Mr. Maxey, on the same Brink, was one of the few buildings still recognisable in Dr. Massey's view. This was formerly the house and office of Sir Phillip Vavasour. He was a highly respectable Wisbech merchant, who had served the office of High Sheriff, receiving his knighthood on presenting, on behalf of the town, an address to George III, on his accession. Going down Timber Market, they came to Mr. Copley's residence—Mounpesson house—so long inhabited by Mr. and Mrs. Fawcett. That had been modernised in front, but at the sides and back as well as internally it had retained its original character. Messrs. Dowson's block seemed to be of that period, and at the time of which he spoke it might have been, as has been believed, an inn. The New Inn and the Globe were both in existence then; and the Unicorn Inn (the premises now occupied by Messrs. Ayers), which bore the date of 1701, was a good specimen of the domestic architecture of James II. Besides these there were some half timbered granaries on the Nene Quay, which were 15th century work. Interesting architectural features remained in the Market Mews at the back of the inns, and particularly so in respect to the archway between Mr. Rust's and the Ship Inn, formerly known as the Market Arch. Less important dwellings of this class were to be seen in the Lynn Road, Horsefair, Canal Row, Timber Market, and Little Church Street. Then they came to the third division—the old buildings that had been refronted, or otherwise greatly modernised. There were several houses in High Street, Messrs. W. S. Collins' and A. W. May's were formerly Dr. Massey's house, and were of red brick, as could be seen in the upper parts, but they had been a great deal pulled about. Under Mr. Leach's house, and that of Mr. Broadberry, were cellars with groined roofs, well worthy of inspection by those of antiquarian tastes. The Rose and Crown had been refronted, probably at the beginning of the century, but inside could be seen the roomy old stairs and panelled work of the 18th century. Messrs. Peatling's premises were formerly the Old Vine, which at

one time was one of the principal inns in the town. An additional story has been put on the building and a balcony added—otherwise the front is much as it was a century back. The George and Mermaid inns had been partially cased or new fronted, but evidence of their antiquity could be seen in the backways. The same might be said of Messrs. Dawbarn and Sons' premises. At the rear, old heavy stone mullioned window frames could be seen with their ancient lead lights, undoubtedly as old as the days of Queen Elizabeth. The Old Talbot (Mr. Geo. Brackenbury's house) was said to be haunted, and it was a singular fact that when some alterations were made in it many years ago, a skeleton was found embedded in the walls. The Old Workhouse, in Albion Place, was a very substantial and creditable edifice of its class. It had a picturesque bell and clock turret, bearing the date of 1722, which was removed when the building was altered. It was used as a workhouse until some 50 years ago, before which time every parish in England had its own poor-house. In Wisbech, and probably elsewhere, it served the purpose of an infirmary or hospital. Striking changes had no doubt been experienced during the present century in every English town, alterations consequent on the substitution of slate for thatch and tiles, and the transition from lead casements to sash windows, and from crown glass to plate. Wisbech had seen such changes. It was said, when he was a boy, that the father of Mr. Stanroyd, who kept a shop for leather gaiters and gloves in High Street (both father and son living to be 90 years old), had a new window put into his front, with what would be reckoned now the tiniest of panes of glass, separated by the clumsiest of sash bars, but which made such a wonderful impression on the neighbourhood that the people came up from the country to admire it! But he was under the impression that scarcely any town of its size had been so topsy-turvied and transmogrified as Wisbech. It was possibly somewhat changed by the construction of the canal. The little river—the Elm Leam—ran pretty much in the same channel, nearly as far as Newcommon Bridge, before it changed its direction, but he had no doubt considerable alteration was brought about when the canal was made; possibly Trafalgar Row and houses near Walsoken Bridge facing Orange Grove were built about that time.

Much more pulling about was however occasioned by Mr. Medworth's scheme from 1810-16, when he built the Crescent upon the site of the Castle, with Union Place, Ely Place, and Market Street—all these changed the town wonderfully. But the Nene Valley Scheme varied the aspect of the town most of all. The formation of the river through the town and the buildings alongside was changed. The course of the stream was shifted when the new bridge was constructed. During the previous century the channel had deepened amazingly. At the time of the issue of Dr. Massey's print they would find that the water was shown as so shallow, and the banks so sloping, that horses were taken to water opposite to Mrs. Gardiner's and Mr. Maxey's. The removal of the Eagre occurred during this period. This was

a tidal wave which still exists in many large rivers, such as the Ganges, &c., causing great damage to small craft. Owing to the works and improvements made at the Nene Outfall the Eagre ceased. Nevertheless the traffic of the river was decidedly brisk; the stream allowing of a large trade, although the craft of that day were small, probably seldom larger than 50 tons' burden. Corn, linseed oil, and butter were exported; 8,000 firkins of butter had been sent in a single year to London, being sold according to the particular brand put on it by a specially appointed Inspector. Relatively to its size, Wisbech then possessed more inns than it did now, a good many of them having ceased to exist. For instance such old market houses as the Unicorn, Old Falcon, Old Talbot, Nag's Head, Bushel, and Green Dragon, had gone, and possibly the one supposed to have occupied Messrs. Dowson's premises. Others had been reduced in size and importance, as the New Inn, Vine, and Duke's Head.\* The latter had a sign which stretched over the whole width of the roadway, as shown in Burgess's print of the Church. They could not, however, regard the reduction in the number of inns in any way as due to the progress of temperance, or an outcome of the abstinence movement. More inns were necessary in 1760 than in 1891, and wherefore? The town was thronged at the assizes, races, marts, fairs, and balls, and there was often a pressing need for visitors from the neighbourhood to stay one or more nights in the town. The condition of the roads was simply terrible, the mud in winter time being up to the axles. McAdam had not then paved the roads. Queen's (or King's) writs could not be served in Marshland in the winter months, and when the Traffords came from Tydd St. Giles to Wisbech they had not unfrequently to stop at Colville House, Newton, for a night; and even then it was often necessary to seek the assistance of the village blacksmith and a bevy of labourers before they could get the old family coach out of the mud: and proceed on their way. Mr. F. C. Southwell (the father of Mr. Alfred Southwell, solicitor), had told him an instance of what occurred at burials at the more distant village as a consequence of the condition of the roads. The incumbent of Sutton St. Edmunds at that time lived in Wisbech, near to the Church gates, and when a death in the parish occurred in winter, the old sexton would go to his master to report the time of the funeral. The clergyman used to take out his watch, and bid the sexton set his own by it, observing after this had been done, "Now, John, remember to-morrow at four o'clock it will be 'Ashes to ashes, dust to

\* When this observation was recorded, the Lecturer believed that a very interesting brick porch, with a window over its archway, near to Mr. Gromitt's house in Church Terrace, and overlooking the north side of the church, was a relic of the original Duke's Head. The late Mr. Foster, carpenter, of Love Lane, altered his opinion, by informing him, after the lecture was delivered, that at the death of Mr. Pope, a former occupier of Mr. Gromitt's house, examination of the deeds of the premises showed that they abutted on, if they did not actually stand on the site of the old "Boar's Head." Mr. Pope's representatives very naturally concluded that the ancient brick porch referred to above, was a remnant of that bygone tavern.

dust." Of course, this implied that the parson would read the Burial Service in his own parlour at Wisbech, at the exact time the sexton was putting the body into the ground at Sutton St. Edmunds. At that time much benevolence, as well as courage, was demanded of the doctors attending country patients; sometimes when setting out late in the evening in reply to an urgent appeal they would find after riding in darkness all night and arriving next day, their patients had been dead some time. In further illustration of the condition of the roads in 1772, Mr. Dawbarn gave another quotation from the writer to whom he had previously referred, "The country round Wisbech is low, watery, and more dreary than the Lincolnshire Fens, the highland being further removed from the sight, and, in consequence, the eye having no prospect of a happier country—no more agreeable place than is immediately before it, becomes satiated with a sameness, which besides being in itself disagreeable, appears to have no end, nor to lead to future enjoyment." On all sides of the town there was a general lack of drainage and the air was impregnated with the effluvia arising from the water charged with decaying vegetable matter. According to the custom of the times, in all decent country homes, thrifty housewives or their daughters spun the flax needed for household use and personal wear. The spinning wheel was then as common a piece of furniture in the houses as the piano is to-day. Itinerating weavers converted the thread into linen cloth, beautiful specimens of which may sometimes be seen now. The flax was home-grown and its cultivation was responsible for producing one of the worst of the evil odours aforesaid. When cut, it was left for sometime steeping in the ditches to allow the outer bark or sheath of the stalk to rot, so that its removal should be easily accomplished, and during this rotting process, persons with sensitive olfactories had a rather bad time. At this period, when so much water lay upon the land, "Wills o' the Wisp" were at times to be seen of a night; and not more than sixty years since some were observed on the Norfolk side of the river by our townsman, Mr. Lambert, a superannuated foreman under the Court of Sewers, when he acted as night watchman during the progress of works of the North Level Sluice. Whether these "Fools' Fires" were phosphorescent, or due to the ignition of gases liberated from the water, the lecturer could not say. Grand facilities existed in those days for Wisbechians to practice fast skating. Few, if any, sluices existed, and according to the late Mr. Joseph Adams, a man putting on his skates at a spot now occupied by the Boys' National School might run for a great many miles in various directions without needing to take off his pattens. It was probable that, even then, the country in the neighbourhood was, in the summer time, by no means destitute of natural beauty. In dry weather, the green lanes as well as the roads were hard and fit for wheel traffic. Mr. Dawbarn's grandfather said that formerly more trees existed and fewer hedges. Naturally, malaria was always prevalent, and the most common effect of it was seen in ague, producing chronic ill-health. According to the popular belief, as ague by the improvement of the

drainage became less general, typhoid took its place. Scientists would probably be able to show that there is reason for this supposition, as in the first attempts of draining the land, only a portion of the moisture was removed and this state of things might easily be much more pernicious to health than a general deluge covering up the mud. Of course, Wisbech and its neighbourhood enjoyed no exemption from the customary visitations of epidemics—scarlet fever, measles, and the like. Among the diseases then everywhere prevalent, not only in Great Britain but in Europe and the world at large, was small-pox. Our grandfathers were grievous sufferers from this dire scourge. It was terribly fatal and even when life was spared the victim commonly carried on his body scars and seams, with damaged eyesight, to the day of his death. Prior to vaccination, and its precursor, inoculation, it has been said that every third adult one met in the streets was thus marked. As to the town itself, its sanitary condition cannot have been much better. The very limited drainage to be found then only removed surface water. There was no sewerage; cesspools and dung heaps, both public and private, abounded everywhere, continually giving off most unfragrant scents. No good drinking water was to be had. Sanitary science did not exist and abominations of all kinds were tolerated. No restraint was put upon noxious trades—slaughter houses, fellmongering, and horse slaughtering polluted the soil and atmosphere unchecked. Respecting the mortality of the town at the time, notwithstanding that the church register of deaths appears to have been very well kept, exact information seems to be wanting. If these records could be accepted as representing the whole truth upon the subject, the unhealthiness of the town 120 years ago would appear to have been not materially worse than it was 40 years since. The yearly death rate might be estimated at about 5 per thousand of the population higher than now. But the class that suffers most from bad sanitation is the infant, and it is here that, the lecturer contended, we were much in the dark. In order to obtain canonical burial it was necessary that the child should have been christened, and this implied the payment of fees. Further fees were necessary for the interment. Is it not morally certain under these conditions, with great laxity as to registration, that a great many infants would be privately buried, and consequently escaped registration? Nevertheless it is remarkable that, with so unsanitary a state of matters, so many persons seemed to become acclimatized. The neighbourhood from ancient times has been distinguished for the number of old people in it. Mr. Wardle, a retired merchant, living on the South Brink, who died about 35 years since, reached within a few months of a century. And an interesting instance may be cited showing how great longevity might be attained under extremely unfavourable conditions. The family of Mr. and Mrs. Bartholomew Adams were all born and brought up in the house with the plastered gable at the corner of the Market Place, already referred to. Not one square foot of yard or garden was attached to the dwelling. There were seven children, three sons and four

daughters. Six are dead; the oldest reached 91, and the youngest 79, minus two days. The youngest of the family—Miss Mary Adams—is living and in her 83rd year. It would appear that from exceedingly early days the Market Place possessed some paving,—the material is described as ragstone. But elsewhere there seems to have been nothing beyond the clay or silt for the passage of vehicles or foot passengers. High Street until early in the 18th century was destitute of cobbles or flags. In wet weather planks were laid upon the earth to enable pedestrians to cross dryshod. The town was first properly paved in 1810. At that time, the streets were nightly in semi-darkness; public lamps, lit with whale oil, were provided. A vast improvement was made in 1833 or 1834 when Mr. Malam erected gasworks. Municipal affairs were under the control of ten Capital Burgesses, elected annually. They appointed one of themselves as president and his title was Town Bailiff. The elections, which were held on November 2nd, were often tolerably lively, especially at midnight, when the poll closed. The quieter inhabitants at those times rejoiced to be peacefully between the blankets. Although at that time Wisbech was without its own magistrates, it seems to have suffered little inconvenience, for Isle magistrates resided in the town and disposed of local cases. The constables and night watchmen wore no uniforms, but the liveried beadles in broad cloth and gold laced garments were, as Mr. Pepys might have said, "Glorious for to behold!" One Wilson, whose headstone, decorated with a mutilated cocked hat, may yet be seen in the Churchyard, appears to have been a parochial star of the first magnitude, and was reputedly peculiarly terrible to evil doers eight or ten years of age. Lame old Tommy Langman and John Todd are well-remembered functionaries. Much license was tolerated on the part of the populace, but the assistance of the law-abiding inhabitants was at times called in to the aid of the constabulary. The more serious outbreaks seemed to have arisen from the high price of food, and fearfully hard times. In 1703 after a bread riot, 14 offenders were sentenced to death, but in some of these cases the sentence was commuted. The last of these great disturbances seemed to have occurred in 1795. During the period dealt with, Great Britain was seldom without a war on hand, notably in connection with the United States and France. Recruiting was actively carried on here as well as elsewhere at fairs, marts, statutes, and the ordinary market days. There is reason to fear that many a poor country yokel, after a drunken debauch, would find that he had taken the "King's shilling," and was bound hard and fast to a service he would not have willingly entered whilst sober. But a far worse evil existed then. The press gang was frequently abroad, laying violent hands on fishermen and sailors in the merchant service and carrying them on board the King's ships, with a very strong probability that they might never see their wives or families again. The mother of the lecturer remembered clearly when she was a child beholding the bitter grief of the black washerwoman, who worked for the family, on being robbed of her husband, who had been



borne off by the cruel pressgang. Hiding places have occasionally been found under the floors and elsewhere in old houses. It is possible they were made for the purpose of concealing those obnoxious to this tyrannical seizure, as well as for the purpose of secreting smuggled goods. In respect to the gaol as it existed before 1800, Mr. Dawbarn had not long ago personally visited the ancient portion. He described a vaulted passage with a window at each end half-sunk below ground. Out of this on each side opened cells, many of them having no other light or ventilation than could be obtained from gratings in the doors. Inside these dismal vaults the wretched prisoners might lie weeks or months amid vermin and filth. A few of the cells had windows, but without glass, and the unfortunate occupants must have been half-frozen during mid-winter. The celebrated philanthropist Howard visited this House of Correction at this time, but passed it over without praise or blame. The inference is that it was neither better nor worse than the English prisons in the latter part of the 18th century, but if this were so, gaols were then indeed terrible places for the confinement of human beings. Melancholy processions were wont to set out after the assizes from this building, convicts being taken in a cart seated on their own coffins to the gallows erected at the Horseshoe corner of the river, with all the town following. The body of the prisoner was after execution commonly given to his friends, but in aggravated cases the remains were dissected or gibbeted. An old relative remembered seeing the rope round the neck of an unhappy lad of 18, condemned for sheep stealing; his father, who had trained him in the ways of vice, shaking hands with him and exclaiming "Die game, my boy!" Truly our penal laws were barbarous in those days. Reference has already been made to the pillory on the roof of the Shire Hall. The stocks, the cage, and whipping post were on the ground in the rear of the building. A humane woman, occupying one of the shops near to the place where the punishment was carried out, was accustomed to run indoors and hide herself during the time. It was not an uncommon procedure at the conclusion of the infliction for the bystanders to send round a hat and to present the proceeds of the collection to the victim, treating him as a martyr. In connection with these whippings, it was mentioned that gross injustice was done to a highly respectable member of society, Mr. Wm. Squire, the chief constable under whose supervision these punishments were inflicted. He received the nickname of "Billy Knots," people asserting that when some of the volunteer force were flogged for breach of discipline in his presence, he had called out to the flogger "Put in some more knots." This statement was flatly contradicted by reliable and well-informed inhabitants, who declared that the words used were "Take out the knots," Mr. Squire in his humanity insisting that the penalty should not be made unduly severe. Communication with distant places, as has already been seen, owing to the state of the roads, was only accomplished with difficulty. Probably Wisbech in the early days, like the rest of the country, was supplied with many of its goods by trains of

pack-horses. These were followed by stage-wagons, and then by three and four horse coaches. Early in the century, the former of these conveyances took about three days in the journey to London, and the coach twelve hours. But at that time considerable improvements had been made in the roads, and the coaching system had been brought to great perfection. Very few people in those days ever wrote a letter or received one. At the local Post Office, as lately as 60 years ago or thereabouts, there was but one dispatch to, and one receipt of letters from London. This was so down to 1840, when the penny post was introduced. How wonderfully the postal system had developed in the country generally may be best judged by a fact communicated to Mr. Dawbarn by a retired travelling inspector of the Post Office, recently deceased. At the beginning of the century there were but two post offices in London itself;—one at St. Martin's-le-Grand, and the other at Charing Cross. The postage of a letter from Wisbech to London 60 years ago was 9d. and to Scotland 1s. 2d. What was the social life of the period? Of course there was the inevitable round of daily business to be attended to; the buying and selling at the weekly markets and less frequent fairs. In this connection there was one minor excitement of the day which might be remarked upon. The town was dependent upon the supply of fish brought into the river by its own smacks or cobses. No one sent to London then for salmon or cod. As soon as the sober and thrifty burgess heard the bell announce the arrival of the boats, he made haste to the spot, so as to be able to purchase on the best terms, and carry home a dinner or supper of the freshest of fish. But what of the amusements of the people? No literary institutions existed, there were no lectures, and books were few and dear, nor was there a single newspaper published in the town. A very few of the wealthier people took the old *Stamford Mercury*, or the *Cambridge Chronicle*, or joined with others in taking a London daily. It should be known, however, that this latter was a miserable specimen of journalism. A few very interesting examples of these early prints may be seen in the Wisbech Museum. The *Morning Chronicle* was not however established until 1770; the *Post* in 1772; and the *Herald* in 1781; the *Times* first appeared in 1772; the *Public Advertiser*, in which were published the celebrated letters of *Junius*, was established in 1752. A very few copies of these, presumably, pretty regularly found their way into the more select circles of the town. There was no place of public evening resort but the taverns, and it is probable the more important of these particular rooms were set apart to the nightly meetings of a "set" or club, in which each of the regular attendants had his own special chair. The kitchens of the various inns would naturally be occupied by the less prominent of the inhabitants. The entire respectability of this habit was then unchallenged. The landlords were often men of property and influence; the term "victualler" in those days was no misnomer. Abundant provision was made for the bed and food of each guest, as well as for his drink. Total abstinence was indeed practised by a few, but they

were stern moralists like Dr. Johnson. The belief was prevalent that abstinence from beer and wine shortened life; and further that drinking of the water of the town or neighbourhood unmixed would unfailingly bring intermittent fever of some sort. "Child, what do you drink so much cold water for?" was the remonstrance addressed to the lecturer when a child, and, like children in general, much accustomed to satisfy thirst from the well or pump. General and local news were discussed nightly, together with the latest gossip of the town or neighbourhood. And each evening, after the day's business was finished, our grandfathers enjoyed their chat and jest, each one drinking for the most part a moderate allowance of stimulants. Mr. Joseph Adams described the common run of shop-keepers of his early days as going on continually year after year, perfectly content to neither gain nor lose financially. Their domestic habits were extremely simple in respect of food and lodging. Dr. Johnson mentions that in the house of his father, the principal bookseller in Lichfield, there was usually but one fire; that belonged to the kitchen, and the family always sat beside it. Life not being maintained at such high pressure as now, the long hours of labour then customary were necessarily less injurious than with us. Naturally people both in town and country were behindhand in their knowledge of the fashions in respect to dress. Folks from the country were recognised as such as soon as they set foot in the Metropolis. It did not follow that because there was no local newspaper that there was no work for the Press. This was an age throughout the land of controversy—political, religious, or moral—by pamphlets and tracts. Wisbech too had its inky warfare, and very often of a decidedly bitter character. Among these disputes the lecturer referred to one that was maintained by a dissenting lady of the town with Mrs. Robertson, wife of the lessee of the theatre, on the "Moral influence of the Stage." The language used by the latter lady would now-a-days be considered the reverse of civil. The town occupying as we have seen so isolated a position, naturally the chief amusements of the people were local. For the masses there were Plough Monday sports, the mart, the statute hirings and three flax fairs yearly. These were varied and enlivened by occasional visits from morris dancers, tumblers, conjurors, and the venerable Punch and Judy show. Ballad singers, and possibly "last dying speech and confession" men were often present on Market days. Strolling theatricals soon gave place to travelling companies with capital and respectability. But from ancient times Wisbechians were always noticed for their marked preference for the circus. The theatrical manager, in allusion to it, scornfully remarked that the people of Wisbech were "half horses."

Naturally the periodical judicial proceedings of the town supplied all classes, while they lasted, with plenty of topics for discussion. The various trials, small and large, conducted in connection with petty and quarter sessions, and especially with the assizes, were often of great interest to the inhabitants. The lecturer, when a child, could remember witnessing the somewhat

imposing procession of the judge, be-wigged and clad in his official costume, proceeding in his carriage to the Shire Hall, heralded by constables marching in a small column, several of them abreast and carrying long staves. No doubt (although the lecturer could not state it on his own recollection), trumpeters gave an additional impressiveness to the scene. The pilloryings, whippings, and hangings already referred to, following these trials, carried the sensational element to its climax. But the races held annually at Emneth, not far from Hagbech Hall, were pre-eminently attractive to the gentry and the people at large. So short-lived is human memory that scarcely any local traditions remain of these sports; nevertheless we are not without an exceedingly vivid representation of them. It so happened that Wisbech was visited in 1778 or thereabouts by a foreigner of European reputation—Joseph Baretti—a friend of Johnson, Burke, and Garrick, the author, among other works, of a standard Italian Dictionary. He stayed with the Southwells at the Castle, and as it was at the time of the races, he was present and recorded his impressions of them in a letter to a friend, of which Colonel Watson gives a translation. The interest of this epistle is much more than local; it is a picture of our national manners and customs of that date as seen in the provinces. Baretti had not previously seen an English race-ground, and the novelty of all he beheld filled him with enthusiastic delight. He marvelled at the speed of the horses, the skill of the jockeys, and the excitement manifested by the spectators. He remarked among other circumstances that not only was betting general among the men—much money changing hands with great suddenness—but even the ladies among themselves wagered, on a smaller scale, so many pots of coffee or so many pounds of tea or chocolate. At the conclusion of the races, Baretti greatly enjoyed what he considered the good humoured merriment displayed by the ladies and gentlemen at a public supper; and he favourably contrasted the general propriety of demeanour, and absence of gross language here, with the ordinary behaviour of his own country people at home under similar circumstances. These comments confirm what is known as to the shockingly low state of public morals in Italy in the last century, and they further show of how doubtful value is our critic's praise of our grandfathers' good manners. It is not to be supposed that betting only occurred at races and fairs. It may be assumed that gambling and laying of wagers was a nightly practice among the fast men meeting at the taverns. The father of Mr. Ambrose Johnson, whose name will be remembered by some of our oldest inhabitants, incurred lasting physical injury through a bet he made with his companions. He undertook to place with his own hand a sixpenny piece under one of the heavy wooden seed-crushing hammers in an oil-mill while they were working, and also successfully in the same manner to remove it. It seems that the coin was safely deposited, but in taking it away Mr. Johnson was not sufficiently swift in movement, and he lost the top joints of two of his fingers. There is good reason to suppose that gambling and betting has been

common in the town from that day to this. A spot upon the wall can be pointed to in the old skittle-alley of the White Lion Hotel, where, not very many years ago, on market days, £5 notes were pinned waiting the issue of the game. Monthly assemblies were held by the aristocracy of the district at the Rose and Crown Inn. French officers—prisoners of war detained at Norman Cross barracks, near Peterborough—were allowed to be present on parole. Those were the days of curled perukes and pig-tails for gentlemen, and piled-up *coiffures* for ladies. Both sexes wore powder. And there was plentiful employment in advance for the barbers and hairdressers of the town. It was the usage of the time for the barber attending upon his customer at the residence of the latter to carry with him in addition to the usual shaving apparatus, a supply of hot water in a metal jug closed by a lid. Sedan chairs, borne by professional bearers, performed the service rendered to-day at evening parties by flies and broughams. The remarkable height of the ladies' head-gear commonly caused the tallest Sedans to be those most in request. Rowdyism had been tolerated in the borough from ancient times and specially in connection with public amusements. Bull-baiting, as at Stamford, was customary on Shrove Tuesdays. The beast was brought out from what has been described as an especially quaint old building on the site of Mr. Oldham's shop on the Market Place, tied to a stake surrounded by a circular barrier of waggons, and assaulted by fierce dogs. As soon as this amusement palled on the appetites of the lawless crowd, it was counted high sport to pull out from the circle one of the waggons and allow the maddened brute to run "amuck" through the streets whither he would. Clarkson related that in his early days he had seen the bull wildly enter the shop now occupied by Messrs. Dawbarn and Sons. That cock-fighting was practised in the town is proved by a rather curious old ballad preserved in the British Museum, and published some years ago, with other records of the past, by the late Mr. Read Adams, of St. Ives. The poet describes in mock-heroic style a duel between a Wisbech cock and a bird from Norfolk. The native triumphed, and the vanquished cock, before breathing out his warlike spirit, disposed by h's last will and testament of his comb and feathers. No tradition remains as to the spot where the cockpit was situated. Of course there was little check put on pugilistic encounters in the streets; bloody noses and black eyes were no uncommon personal decorations. The late Mr. Joseph Climenson, comparing public behaviour one hundred years ago with the state of things existing before his death, found very striking improvement. The road between Old and New Walsoken at the time of the Leet (or fair) was an utter pandemonium. One would hear among the crowd everywhere, obscene talk, swearing, and blaspheming; and see riotous drunkenness and pitched battles with fisticuffs. We cannot suppose in the town itself on the occasion of fairs and marts much more order prevailed. At all public rejoicings, the customary mode of illumination was by placing a tallow candle in the various panes of the windows. Bonfires were made on the

Market Place, and the removed obelisk was said from this cause to have been much blackened, especially on one of its sides. At coronations and festivals 100 years ago, in our country towns provision was deliberately made for drunkenness by the populace. An old North Lincolnshire cottager in conversation with the late Mr. Staveley of this town, referring to the coronation of George III., told how the heads were knocked out of the casks of ale on Gainsborough Market Place, adding, "I was a farmer's sarvent then, and I got 'fa-a-mous' and droonk." As an instance of rude practical joking it may be mentioned that a waggoner, under the influence of drink, left his loaded hay waggon with the horses standing uncared for upon, or near, the Market Place. A band of boisterous youths, some of them possibly young farmers from outside the town, with great labour, and with the aid of ladders and ropes, lifted the waggon on the roof of the Old Shire Hall—the horses being unharnessed, and the hay unloaded and loaded up again in the operation. It is too much to suppose that the wretched victim when, on awakening from his drunken sleep, he beheld his waggon perched up—as it were—in mid-air, enjoyed the fun as fully as did the spectators. In the world's history, mob-justice has commonly proved injustice; and in Wisbech the injustice done to innocent people was not infrequently gross. They were subjected to the unfairest of censure, if not to insult. If a man's conduct rightly or wrongly gave offence to his neighbours, more especially to those of the lower grade, they would make some kind of likeness of him; put it in a cart and flog it before his door. Mr. Smalley, the grocer (Mr. Dowson's predecessor), was whipped in effigy for the alleged offence of bringing into the town, when copper money was scarce, base coin, and a Mr. Shinfield was dealt with in the same manner because he dared to employ female assistance in his business of staymaking. Previously the work had been done exclusively by men, and it was the invasion of their rights that the populace resented. Both these persons were, according to our modern ideas—in the particular actions which made them obnoxious to mob-displeasure—not only entirely free from blame, but acting wisely and justly. The moral and religious condition of the town, as a whole, was sadly degraded. A meagre secular education was provided for the well-to-do classes in the Grammar School and private seminaries; but among the poor there was general illiteracy. Schools providing cheap, satisfactory elementary education were established at the beginning of this century by the efforts of a philanthropic townswoman, and assisted by the subscriptions of a few benevolent persons. Previously to this time dame schools, it has been stated, advertised their terms to ordinary pupils at 1d. or 2d. weekly; sometimes adding the further important announcement that 1½d. a week extra was required of "them as larns manners." There was little distinction made between weekdays and Sundays, and the general laxity of Sabbath observance may be inferred from the fact that Mr. York, a deacon of the General Baptist Chapel, was accustomed to open his shop during the early hours of Sunday. It had been said that Messrs. Jecks and Dawbarn were the first

shopkeepers to close their premises for the whole of the day, but the second of the two partners, although performing the duties of a dissenting pastor, considered it perfectly legitimate to read the newspaper on Sunday evenings. Religious services were maintained regularly every Sunday once, if not twice, in the parish church, and in the meetings of the Friends, Presbyterians, and two Baptist bodies. But almost to the end of last century, as far as the bulk of the inhabitants were concerned, they were spiritually like sheep without a shepherd. Home and Foreign missions, Sunday schools, and tract distribution were then, if existent at all, only in their infancy. Politically, Nonconformists were under a ban—proscribed and debarred from all share in municipal or judicial functions. It was an indispensable condition of office that the candidate should previously receive the sacrament at the parish church. The lecturer's father, who was elected Town Bailiff in 1831-2, was the first Dissenter for many generations permitted to fill that position. The effects of John Wesley's great revival seem to have first reached the town in 1789, and the earliest public services of the Methodists were probably conducted in the open air, the preachers being not unfrequently assailed by abuse, showers of mud, rotten eggs, and stones. Up to this date the Church of England locally was evangelically dead and Nonconformity asleep. Dissenters, however, seem, early in the century, to have awakened and bestirred themselves to good purpose. The effects of their zeal were candidly recognised by the late Mr. Hopkins on entering on the incumbency of the parish. His observation of the spiritual condition of affairs in the town led him to say that, but for the work done by Nonconformists, the town would have been utterly heathen. By way of summing-up, the lecturer asked, How does the present compare with the past? Were the former times in Wisbech better than our own? Time like an artful enchanter casts a glamour over the spectator of bye-gone scenes. The picturesque aspects are skilfully lit up, brought prominently into view, and surrounded by a golden glow to win his admiration. The ugly features are carefully veiled. Granting the existence of legitimate cause for regret in relation to the removal of some beautiful old structures, or characteristic bits of architecture, the abolition of local privileges, or changes in circumstances, entailing loss of municipal prestige, the lecturer, nevertheless, was bound to say, dispassionately, that we have gained vastly by the course of events. Few would be willing to return even for a year to the condition of matters which existed a century or more since. Not only has England, but the whole world, benefitted enormously by the march of civilization. Look at the facilities given to-day to free locomotion, and the extraordinary gain everywhere enjoyed in material comforts due to the increased intercourse of the nations, and the almost unrestricted interchange of their various productions—natural and artificial. Not alone are the necessities of life obtained more cheaply by the poor of our day than in bygone times, but luxuries are enjoyed by all classes to an extent undreamed of by our grandfathers. And in these im-

proved conditions, Wisbech has shared to the full. It would indeed be difficult to find a British town of its size and position so favoured in respect to its social or public conveniences, exemplified in the ready access afforded by its numerous railway trains to the Metropolis and all parts of the country; also in its excellent telegraphic and postal services. Modern sanitary science has rendered very essential service to the town; it is now sewered and supplied by unusually pure spring water brought from the highlands of Norfolk. The drainage, too, of the whole district is excellent; in the wettest weather flooded land is almost unknown, and naturally Wisbech and the vicinity have become far healthier. Although seated in the great Fen level, the neighbourhood of the town, when the trees around are in leaf, the hedges are green, and the various crops are growing in the fields, possesses a rural beauty to which no one with a love of nature can be insensible. Its country lanes, picturesque villages, and their fine old churches are justly entitled to much admiration. The borough in respect to education has been entirely altered during the century; it is now remarkably well supplied with the means, not only of elementary instruction, but of literary and artistic culture. In two of its institutions—the Museum and the Working Men's Institute—it possesses educational advantages rarely enjoyed in country towns. But looking at the subject from a higher point of view, from the days of the Reformation, when much enlightened zeal—due to the unlocking of the Bible to the people generally—was displayed throughout the district, Wisbech has possessed a priceless treasure. Has she profited by it as she should have done? Is the religious and spiritual condition of the population worthy of the boon enjoyed? God bless the town; and save it from the condemnation infallibly certain to alight upon it, if it be found despising and neglecting its privileges!—In the course of the lecture, Mr. Dawbarn made reference to persons deceased or living to whom he had been indebted for information. Among the latter to whom his thanks were due, he especially expressed his obligations to Mr. Peckover and Mr. F. Rogers.

In a subsequent lecture, Mr. Dawbarn illustrated his remarks by a pen-and-ink drawing of the Old Shire Hall and Shambles on the Market place (pulled down in 1810), sketched by himself from the description given to him by the late Mr. John Anderson, and others, who remembered the building. A reproduction of this sketch is given with some other views of Old Wisbech. A photograph was also shown of Ledbury Market House, built in the time of Queen Elizabeth, showing the existence of a similar building in a Herefordshire market town. Mr. Dawbarn having explained that, since the delivery of the previous lecture, additional matter had come into his possession, proceeded:—

Two very reliable informants have furnished fresh facts. One of these persons is Mr. F. Rogers, to whom the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood are indebted for certain interesting

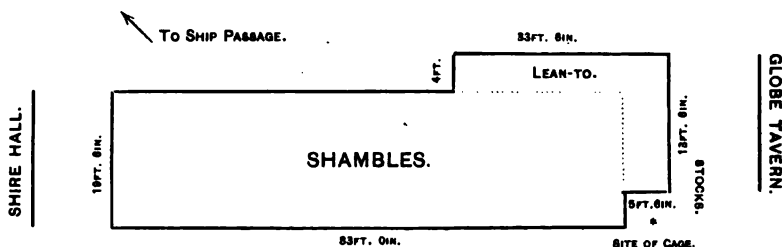


statements already recorded. Although by no means an old man, yet having lived in his early days with his father and grandfather (both old Wisbechians), he has carefully preserved various circumstances, gleaned from their recollections, which seemed to him worthy of remembrance. The other relator of bygone events is our townsman, Mr. John Anderson (since deceased), who, at the extraordinary age of ninety-one, narrated—with unimpaired memory and singular clearness of statement, as well as with the authority of an eye and ear witness—incidents which he only could remember. Cattle pens are shown in Dr. Massey's print of the North Brink, near to Mr. E. H. Jackson's house, indicating that at that time it was customary to hold the live stock market there. But at crowded fairs or sales, bullocks and sheep seem to have been driven, at the driver's pleasure, into the Old Market and High Street. Posts and chains were set up, as a defence for pedestrians, in front of the Vine in the former, and against Mr. White's shop (now Mr. Leach's) in the latter thoroughfare. Some inhabitants took exception to the removal of these barriers in 1810, but the construction of a cattle market, properly provided with pens, on the site of the present Corn Exchange, rendered them no longer necessary. The footpath round the Market Place, next the shops, was also formerly protected by posts, but without intermediate chains. The double line of wood railing by the neck of the canal, extending from the Old Sluice, along the Lynn Road, now much shortened, was, presumably, constructed for the protection of foot-passengers, on the removal of the annual sale of horses to that place from the Old Horse-fair. Mr. Anderson's memory of collateral circumstances enables him to fix the date on which the Obelisk upon the Market Place was removed by the late Mr. Pope, builder and stonemason, as April 17th, 1811. The former individual was a schoolboy at the time, and recollects seeing scaffolding and tackle being used for bringing down the blocks of stone. In a memorandum inserted by the late Mr. Bays in his copy of Watson's History of Wisbech, he says the lowering of the urn which surmounted the Obelisk was effected by a sailor in the town. Mr. Anderson is able to inform us that the approach to the flat leaded roof of the Old Shire Hall was by an inside stair. While the building remained, the pillory, which stood on a wooden platform upon its roof, served for public whippings, but when the hall was demolished, these punishments were usually performed in a wagon drawn up at the corner of the Market Place nearest to the Robin Hood, and Mr. Bray's new furniture store. When the pillory itself was used, the hands only of the culprit were fastened in it, his head being at liberty, but in the latter cases a frame serving the purpose of a whipping post was set up in the waggon. A very marked difference was displayed by the various offenders thus punished in their manner of bearing the infliction. Some bore it like stoics, while others writhed and howled at each stroke. But after the erection of the present Sessions House, with more aggravated offences, the criminal was sentenced to be flogged in a wagon drawn from that building along High Street,

round the Market Place, and back. At such times the magistrates witnessed the procedure from the upper windows of the Butter Cross, now removed, as the waggon passed beneath. Wilson, the beadle already mentioned, plied the cat-o'-nine tails upon the naked back of the man, in the sight of a large concourse of people, delivering three strokes in rapid succession, then pausing before repeating the operation, and so on until it was supposed that justice was satisfied. How severe these punishments might be, on occasions, is proved by Mr. Anderson's statement that at the last public whipping in the town, whether from the unhealthy condition of the poor wretch, due to his dissipated habits, or the great heat of the weather when the sentence was carried out, or some other extraneous cause, gangrene supervened, and the victim died. The Shambles, as has already been said, were removed at the same time as the Shire Hall, in 1810. The former building which dated from the end of the 16th century was all of wood, probably oak, save its gray slated or tiled roof. It consisted of a covered market surrounded by posts supporting a large chamber over. Such market houses seem to have been customary at that period in the smaller English country towns. Examples may be seen to-day at Market Harboro', at Bridgnorth, at Ross, and Ledbury in Herefordshire. The last named building is of the days of Queen Elizabeth, and deservedly admired for its design and workmanship. The upper room, now let for public meetings, was, it is said, originally used as a storehouse for the corn brought into the town on pack-horses, to be sold in bulk and not by sample, as is the modern custom. This granary rests on sixteen shapely posts or pillars made, like the other work, of Spanish chestnut, and beneath its shelter, from its first erection till now, a weekly market has been held for poultry, eggs and butter. Very scanty details remain as to the appearance of the Wisbech Shambles, but probably they were not as handsome an edifice as the one described. Nevertheless the two buildings were in their main features very similar. As at Ledbury, the upper floors of the Shambles at Wisbech were used for the storage of corn or flour; but the covered space beneath, between the posts, was entirely devoted to the sale of butcher's meat, being divided into separate stalls or shops. For some years before their demolition, both the Shire Hall and Shambles had been suffered to become very shabby and out of repair. Probably this neglect of proper periodical cleansing and renovation may explain how it was that during the last days of their existence only about three butchers occupied shops in the shambles.\* One of these, named

\* In connection with these lectures, enquiry was made whether any contemporary representation of the Shambles was extant. As far as the lecturer then knew, he believed there was none. But shortly afterwards Mr Foster, of Love Lane (since deceased), very obligingly lent him a pocket book belonging to his grandfather, containing memoranda of the valuation of the various materials constituting the structure before its demolition in 1810. Four distinct valuations by different parties are given. It should be noticed that the estimated value of the site, comprising 1,804 feet of ground (copyhold), as well as of the materials, is included. The respective amounts are, £217, £250, £300, and £400. Mr.

Place, had his store at the corner nearest the Ship Inn. A large pair of scales which he owned was much in request for weighing quarters of beef, or large joints, by the neighbouring butchers in the market. Tradition says that on a certain Saturday an excited cow rushed wildly among the pots and pans exposed for sale with a set of scales dangling from its horns. Whether these weighing appliances belonged to the butcher Place aforesaid, deponent saith not. It is a moral certainty—of course—that the upper chamber of the Shambles was not originally constructed devoid of windows or openings for light and air—glazed or otherwise—but Mr. Anderson cannot remember any. He does, however, distinctly recollect that it had a door in the side nearest to where Mr. Mehew's shop now stands, which



was approached by a broad-stepped outside ladder. On the site of that shop stood the premises of the hirer of the granary just mentioned—Bell, a miller and baker. He occupied the windmill whose removal from opposite the Horseshoe Corner to the Black Bear at Walsoken has previously been mentioned. Bell junior, his son, shortly after this date, pulled down his father's shop, rebuilding it in the present form. Until the early part of the century, the market women sold their poultry and eggs on planks and trestles planted at the side of the Shambles, toward the shops of Messrs. Oldham and Mehew. No awning or other shelter, even in inclement weather, seems to have been provided, nevertheless well-to-do and well-dressed wives of farmers were regular attendants here each week; and the mother of the late Miss Littlewood,

Foster, senior, has recorded in detail the dimensions of the posts (supporting the building), beams, plates, rafters, boarding, etc., but has not mentioned whether any of the woodwork, oak or fir, was moulded, or had architectural features. So far as information extends, it leads to the conclusion that in the original construction of the Shambles, utility was the prime consideration; and seeing that the fabric stood unshaken from 1592 to 1810, it may be supposed to have fully answered its purpose. Nevertheless, had it remained until to-day, the country dealers in butter and poultry would have found it a better sheltered market than the one in use. The lecturer was informed by Mr. Foster, quoting from the recollections of a person or persons dead, that the unoccupied butchers' shops or stalls in the Shambles,—of which there were many for some years prior to their removal—were on winter evenings the resort of groups of the town lads, glad of a place of shelter from wintry weather. Their chief amusement was at those times the telling of stories, and listening to them. But what is perhaps of more interest to the general reader than the memoranda alluded to, is a skeleton plan of the Shambles, with the dimensions of the principal parts, which is given above.

OLD SHIRE HALL AND SHAMBLES.



MARKET MEWS.



OBELISK, 32 FT. HIGH.



KING'S HALL, ELIZABETHAN HOUSE ON NORTH BRINK.

# VIEWS OF OLD WISBECH.

OLD SHIRE HALL AND SHAMBLES. MARKET MEWS. OBELISK, 32 FT. HIGH.  
KING'S HALL, ELIZABETHAN HOUSE ON NORTH BRINK.

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TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

of York Row, was long remembered as one who sold her butter in the market, wearing especially handsome lace sleeves. At the end of the Shambles nearest the Globe, stood a small house. It contained a dwelling and two shops. One of these, which faced the Griffin, was a second-hand clothes store, managed by the wife of Faircloth, progenitor of some inhabitants of that name still residing in the town. He was the driver of the mailcart, and until the carriage of the mail bags was performed by the stage-coach, he daily accomplished the journey to and from Cambridge—no light duty even if it were performed to-day with our improved roads and vehicles. The other shop was occupied by Barsley, a hairdresser, and looked towards the premises of Mesdames Storbeck and Tyars. Mr. Anderson well remembers that it was here, when he was a youngster, that his hair was cut. The present generation is for the most part ignorant of the way in which cobblers used to carry out their calling, but to old people their peculiar little hutches, called "Bulks," seemed to have disappeared but yesterday. These confined cabins were commonly constructed under the windows of larger shops, and (although the headway was increased by sinking the "bulk" one or two steps below the pavement), there was only room enough for the shoemaker to ply his awl and wax-ends in a sitting position. The usual weekly rent of these exposed and draughty pigeon-holes was about a shilling. One of the last of them remaining was placed under the stallboard of the butcher's shop kept by Mr. Jeremiah Hardmeat, at the corner of the Market Place and Union Street. Referring to the notice of Sedan chairs by the lecturer, an elderly friend has recently informed him that she remembers one being employed when she was a child (possibly about 1823 or 1824) to convey an invalid lady, then visiting Wisbech, to her place of worship. The chair in question was lent for her accommodation by a principal merchant of the town, Mr. Rayner, a resident in the Old Market. When it carried Mrs. Rayner of a night, a footman preceded it with a lantern containing a lighted wax candle. The borough, in those days, was guarded nightly by the venerable "Charleys," as the Cockneys styled them. They were members of the general body of constables, and four of these coated, caped, and muffled-up functionaries, each bearing a staff, rattle, and lantern, patrolled their respective districts from night to dawn. As they marched, at intervals they gruffly proclaimed the hour—"Twelve o'clock" or "Half-past one," as the time chanced to be. No doubt this habit was designed by our grandfathers, in their wisdom, to furnish proof to the burgesses that the watchmen were awake, and duly performing their duties. It was probably the fear that the patrol might sleep, instead of keeping watch and ward, which explains the circumstance, vouched for by Mr. Anderson, that no sentry boxes or other permanent shelter were provided for them by the authorities. He well remembers that it was their habit at certain times of the night to congregate on the steps of the then existing shop of Dowson and Co. But Mr. Rogers affirms that before these antiquated officials gave place to the modern police, a

humane person, Mr. Curtis, an upholsterer, occupying Mr. Ford's premises on Cornhill, privately provided the watchmen with a cosy cabin against his back gates in the Old Market. In this connection, the lecturer asks to be forgiven for mentioning another and more questionable nightly patrol which was believed by the credulous to be maintained on the Brinks. Tradition asserted that the ghost of a woman, who had formerly acted dishonestly in her trades of milk selling and vending of green grocery or other articles, proclaimed at intervals in a woeful voice, "Weight and measure I made never; milk and water I sold ever!" Possibly this unhappy spirit did the work now performed by the Adulteration Acts and the Inspector of Weights and Measures.

Naturally, as people of both sexes then needed more attention than they do now to the dressing of their hair, hairdressers and barbers were relatively a more important class of the small shopkeeping community. It is in rather singular agreement with this inference that the only shop in either of Dr. Massey's prints in which the nature of the business carried on can be determined (innkeeping excepted) is a hairdresser's. A barber's pole can be clearly distinguished in the view of the Brinks, on premises adjoining the ancient Nag's Head, and early in the century this shop, so Mr. Rogers says, was kept by a respectable barber named Vaillant. This trade was a brisk one at fairs, crowded markets, or other gatherings; and one of the fraternity named Poucher, on the day when the Irishmen were hanged (two of whom were afterwards gibbeted) earned with his own hands a guinea by shaving and hair-dressing. The money earned more easily then than later, was spent more quickly. Saint Monday was as religiously observed by the knights of the razor and scissors as by the tailors and shoemakers. Three members of the profession were notably, if not honorably, distinguished by their uproarious demonstrations in the streets after a carousal. They were Barsley, already named, Richard Munton, and Jacob Wilkinson. The last-named, it was said, had previously been one of the storming party at the celebrated siege of Bajadoz, where he quickly possessed himself of a rich booty in the shape of Spanish doubloons, but only to be robbed of them again as speedily, while he, and numbers of his fellow soldiers, lay drunk from the plunder of the city wine-cellars. These worthies, on a Monday, paraded the town, each using his barber's pole as his walking staff, and indulging in snatches of bacchanalian songs. Another member of the tonsorial brotherhood, a tall and lusty specimen of his order, had evidently mistaken his vocation. A place on the stage of a Mart booth, or inside a travelling circus, was that for which nature or his own misapplied aptitudes had clearly fitted him. On occasions he would regale his customers in his shop by standing head downwards on a pomatum pot. While thus inverted he would go through the further performance of drinking a half-pint of beer. Who says that genius did not exist in those days in the town of Wisbech? A reward of 5s. could be claimed, at the annual bull-baiting, by anyone possessed of sufficient pluck

and agility to seize the enraged beast by its tail. Mr. Rogers tells how a barber named Squire succeeded in performing this feat, but at fearful cost to himself. He, evidently plucky as he was, lacked the skill so often displayed by matadors or torreadors in the Spanish bullfights, for the animal, with a sudden turn, caught him on its horns and tossed him. Squire did not die there and then, but suffered such severe internal injuries that he never recovered. But all the haircutting was not performed by the regular masters of the craft. This anecdote shows that amateurs could, if need be, practise its mysteries, and on unwilling subjects. Mr. Curwen, a leading solicitor and the town clerk, was accustomed to spend convivial evenings at the Vine. On a certain Saturday night, as it appears, after joining with a number of farmers and others in drinking shilling glasses of punch, he lost consciousness (his wisdom had left him long before), and on awakening he made the painful discovery that his queue, or pigtail, had been ruthlessly shorn from his head. Rewards which were offered failed to discover the perpetrator of the outrage, and the offenders escaped detection. Many years afterwards, Mr. Rogers learned from the lips of an important farmer living near the Foul Anchor, Mr. Thomas Greeves, that that individual had for a whole week carried the precious tail in his pocket. Mr. Nicholas Taylor, of Leverington, and a resident French teacher named Suchard, were supposed to be also implicated in this abominable "Rape of the Lock." The lecturer remembers well, in his early days, one of the last Wisbechians who wore a tail. He was Ralph Hutchinson, a retired surgeon, who lived and practised, before medical registration was enforced, in Little Church Street. In his old age and dotage he removed to another quarter, residing with a daughter. His pigtail was not as reverently dealt with by juvenile hands as it was fitting it should have been. But by personal inspection, the speaker can state that it was a tail of hair some twelve inches long, carefully wrapped round with black ribbon or other material, to within an inch of the end, which terminated in a kind of natural brush. As it has already been said, times were decidedly harder in the days of our grandfathers for the middle and lower classes, than with us. The sufferings of the poor must necessarily have often been terribly severe. While wages were lower, almost all the principal articles of food were dearer. The years 1815 (the year of Waterloo) and 1816, were especially afflictive. Prolonged rain had caused ruinously bad harvests all over the country, and the corn laws were framed to shut out from English markets the grain of other countries. The price of the quartern loaf rose to 1s. 4d., and it is said to as much as 1s. 8d. And not only was the price terribly high, but the quality of the flour was so bad, that the bread made from it was at times scarcely fit for human consumption. The lecturer has been told by old people some of their experiences at this time in connection with baking their bread. If a loaf chanced to fall as it left the oven, the shell would crack, and the inside, in a semi-fluid condition, would run about the floor like an uncooked pancake. This state of things



was more than local; and the better-off classes of the country at large were appealed to, it is said, by royalty, to mitigate the evil by abstaining from the use of white flour, and especially in connection with pastry making. It was hoped by the saving, due to the use of whole meal by all classes, the scarcity might be diminished. Nor was bread the only article of common consumption that was dear. Condiments which to-day we reckon almost as necessities of life, were, in consequence of taxation, sold at prohibitive prices. Salt was 5s. per stone, and the cost of salting half his pig involved the sacrifice by the poor man of the other half. Sugar was four or five times its present price. The late Miss Ann Adams, who died about two years back at 91, remembered when she was a girl saying to her mother, "When loaf sugar falls to a shilling a pound, we will always use it with our tea." The latter article was in like manner proportionately much dearer then than it is now. An old and observant inhabitant, now deceased, speaking of the relative cost of clothing in his youth and latter years, remarked that with one exception—viz., that of substantial boots and shoes—all articles of clothing had become greatly cheaper. Can we wonder that the poor murmured at their lot, and that in many places they were so misguided as to indulge in rioting and violence? The millers and bakers, obviously, must have had a rough time during these seasons of scarcity, and Bell, the occupier of the granary over the Shambles, was an object of especial dislike and abuse. He was accused by the populace of grinding beans with his wheat, and a riotous gang hung a loaf of his bread upon a pole, and carried it through the town with a placard attached saying, "My masters say I shall rot before I drop;" that is, drop in price. Thanks to the prudence and energy of the authorities, accompanied with the blessing of Providence, Wisbech escaped any such melancholy outbreak as occurred at Littleport in May, 1816, and which led to the hanging of five rioters, and the severe punishment of nineteen others. Much benevolent consideration for the distressed poor was shown in the town, and particularly by some of the principal merchants, who allowed them to purchase dressed wheat at a guinea a bushel. The cost of grinding was supposed to be defrayed by the miller's toll. He claimed the offal as his remuneration for his labour. Let us devoutly trust that such hard times may never again be known in the town or country. Strangers, some years back, have commented on the unusual number of dummy windows which they observed in the town, and more especially in and near the Crescent. Why Wisbech should be distinguished by this peculiarity, may perhaps be explained by the fact that when Mr. Medworth executed his building schemes, and when the modernizing of so many public and private edifices was in process, the now almost forgotten window-tax weighed heavily on owners and occupiers of house property. This impost, which originated in the reign of William III., was at various times increased in amount until 1808. Even after some reduction of the tax had been granted in 1823, it sufficed to bring a large sum yearly into the national exchequer:—£1,250,000 in 1840; and

before its abolition in 1851 it realized over £1,800,000. Houses containing nine windows were charged 21s. yearly, and by a progressive scale, dwellings containing 30 windows paid £9 16s. 3d.; and so on in proportion. No tax can be popular, but surely of all the vicious exactions devised by any Government, never was one more utterly mischievous alike in principle and practice. The window tax, by offering a premium on the shutting out the light and air of heaven, inflicted a grievous injury upon the national health, and its abolition has necessarily added to the sanitary improvements of this generation. Few who visit the town ever realize its great antiquity. The alterations attendant on the pulling about of the Castle premises, the pulling down of the Shire Hall and Shambles in 1810, the re-construction of the Bridge, and alterations connected with the Nene Valley scheme carried out in 1854, will not by any means fully account for the exceedingly modern aspect of the larger part of Wisbech. To account for this newness of appearance, it must be borne in mind that towards the end of last century, throughout England, architectural taste sank to low water mark. Public and domestic edifices of a bygone period distinguished by beauty of design and excellence of construction were despised because they were considered old fashioned. Such buildings were often recased or ruthlessly destroyed to make room for structures planned and built in a style the meanest and ugliest that has ever been adopted by a professedly civilized people. Wisbech seems to have been full to the brim with this passion of substituting the new for the old, and the worse for the better. The model house at the beginning of the century in and round the town was a great brick packing case pierced with rectangular apertures, the whole presenting an aspect utterly devoid of dignity or grace. With reference to bygone public buildings, we freely admit that our grandfathers were fully justified in removing from the Market Place the Old Shire Hall. As a building it was poverty-stricken and unbeautiful, and space was imperatively demanded for market purposes. But why should a substantial and commanding pillar like the obelisk be carted away as so much old stone, or wherefore were the Shambles destroyed? That they had become foul by neglect we admit, but according to our conceptions this is rather a reason for cleansing and restoring than for annihilating a building. The fact that similar ancient structures exist to-day, as we have said, at Ross, Ledbury, Market Harboro', and Bridgenorth, and are still serving their original purpose as covered markets, is a ground for regret that the ancient Shambles were not cleared of the butchers' shops and appropriated as a market for poultry and butter in Wisbech. If such a building had been allowed to remain on the Market Place until to-day, we are persuaded it would have been highly valued. Among the photographs exhibited is one of the house which stood on the site of the present Post Office, formerly belonging to Mr. Shephard, and afterwards to Mr. Abraham Usill. This print sufficiently illustrates the prevalence at the period indicated of the spirit of ignorant meddling in architecture. Sufficient of the original appearance of the building can be inferred

from the position of the gable-end, which is shown in the picture, to enable us to judge of the changes that were made in the front. Perhaps its date was that of William III. or Ann. Can anything uglier than the recasing of the facade be conceived? The White Lion was used even more cruelly. At the recent rebuilding of the front portion of the ancient Tudor hotel, as the stucco, with which the original structure had been covered early in the century, was stripped off, wood-work beautifully wrought in oak was laid bare; while inside the house, massive oak floor and ceiling beams, ornamented with skilfully designed mouldings, were found encased in paltry lath and plaster. And such changes for the worse have been so common, that few even of the townsfolk suspect that a large proportion of the houses, especially those devoted to trade purposes, wear masks. Beneath the casing often exists brickwork of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  or 2 centuries old. In very pleasant contrast to these regrets, attention is called to the fact that an exceedingly fine old dwelling—Bank House—has remained to us as nearly as possible in its original state. A lecturette on its original construction and after internal decorations, and especially upon its beautiful wood carvings, would be of great interest to such of our townspeople as possess an appreciation of the art of the past, and it is to be hoped that such an address may be delivered at an early date by the one person qualified to give it—the present proprietor.

A description of the construction and decorative features of Bank House will be found at the beginning of this chapter. The late Mr. Thomas Craddock, who had himself placed on record much that was of value in local history, wrote when nearly 80 years of age, to Mr. Dawbarn:—"These byegone facts seem to renew my youth, and must be especially attractive to those who, like myself, know the ancient history of the town." To the older inhabitants, the foregoing notes will probably have recalled many remarkable and forgotten features of former days, and will also convey to the present generation a vivid picture of the conditions and circumstances of life in the time of their forefathers.

## CHAPTER IV.

## WISBECH NEWSPAPERS OF THE PAST AND PRESENT.



THE first printed English newspaper which rises above the suspicion of forgery, was founded by Nathaniel Butter, who seems to have been born not many miles from Wisbech, for it is affirmed that he was a native of Lynn. He was a London news-writer, who collected the information of the day, and posted it to subscribers in the country. To save the labour of writing the news, Butter hit upon the expedient of printing his information upon a single sheet, from which circumstance originated, in 1622, the first newspaper, called *The Certaine Newes of the Present Week*. The result of his experiment is not altogether certain. Some allege that it was a success, whilst others state that he had a sorry time of it, and that he found it such a labour to get it out, that Butter had to stop his paper for five or six weeks at a time, to recruit his strength and to obtain money to meet expenses. It is added that he became weary of printing, and ultimately ended his days in destitution. Another striking figure in the annals of journalism was of Norfolk birth, viz., Sir Roger l'Estrange, who has been described as "the first journalist to sit in the House of Commons; also the earliest English journalist distinguished by the favour of the Crown, and the first English writer to make journalism a profession." He was the youngest son of Sir Hamon l'Estrange, a former owner of Hunstanton Hall, where he was born in 1616. For endeavouring to aid the cause of Charles I., by planning the surprise of

the town of Lynn, he was condemned to death, but managed to escape, and after the Restoration, when he was appointed censor of the Press, he published first, the *Intelligencer*, and afterwards, in 1665, the *London Gazette*. So that within a few miles of Wisbech, two of the founders of the English Press spent at least a portion of their lives.

To the *Lincoln, Rutland, and Stamford Mercury* belongs the distinction of being the second oldest provincial newspaper in the Kingdom. *Berrow's Worcester Journal* claims to be the most ancient, having been started in the year 1690. In 1695, only five years later, the *Stamford Mercury* came into existence, and it has been uninterruptedly published in Stamford for over 200 years. Mr. Edward Joyce, the present manager of this journal, informs the writer that it was originally known as the *Stamford Mercury*; then as *Howgrave's Stamford Mercury*,\* and since about the year 1780, under its present more comprehensive name. Immediately below the title in the earliest copies appears the following particulars, "being Historical and Political observations on the Transactions of Europe, together with Remarks on Trade." The whole of this information is contained within twelve small 8vo pages, and was then sold for three half-pence. It gradually increased in size, and although always published in the southern corner of the great County of Lincoln, it is still the acknowledged County newspaper, and has this year, 1896, reached a circulation never known before. Norwich was the home of another pioneer provincial paper, the *Norwich Postman*, which was first published in 1706. To Mr. Flower, of the *Cambridge Journal*, published in 1744, the invention of the leading article as a commentary upon public events is due, this new departure originating at the time of the first French Revolution; whilst associated with the *Norwich Courant* was Edward Cave, the journalist, who commenced systematically to publish parliamentary debates, and was founder of the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

The earliest newspaper bearing a Wisbech title—the *Lynn and Wisbech Packet*—came into existence on January 7th, 1800, in readiness to welcome the advent of the nineteenth century. The first number was issued from the office of Turner and Whittingham, of Lynn, who had Mr. White, High Street, Wisbech, as their agent. The earlier issues contain but little local intelligence, and as it was published at the price of sixpence, with a three-halfpenny stamp impressed upon it, this small four-

\* A copy of *Howgrave's Stamford Mercury* of 1736 is preserved in the Wisbech Museum.

page sheet must have had an extremely limited circulation. From its columns one learns that wheat was in 1800 selling at 112s. per quarter, and a quartern loaf at 1s. 3½d. It is not certain how long the *Lynn and Wisbech Packet* existed; probably, from the few numbers known to be preserved, it had but a short career.\* It is said that in 1813, the *Wisbech Observer* was published by Mr. J. Pearson, whose office was opposite the old Custom House, and it is oddly described as a paper for "essays and anecdotes of local geniuses." Unfortunately, we do not know of the existence of a copy. It was not until September 17th, 1836, that a paper for the circulation of current news, and actually printed and published in Wisbech, appeared. Its title, the *Star in the East*, betokened an intention to herald the expected dawn of a brighter era. Mr. Neil Walker (subsequently joint author with Mr. Craddock of a *History of Wisbech*) was the publisher, and his office was at the foot of the Stone Bridge, near the "Stamp," the fish market of half a century ago, the printing office being in Gaol Lane. The paper was issued at the price of fourpence, but the influence it exercised was of such a dubious character that but few deplored its decease after an existence of barely four years. During part of its career, the *Star in the East* was identified with some remarkable proceedings in a building in Great Church Street, which is now the School of Science and Art. Some of the supporters of this paper attempted to make Sunday a day for dancing and other entertainments of a secular character. An inscription, now obliterated, was placed on the front of the building, taken from the song of Rob Roy, the freebooter, in Wordsworth's poem, and was as follows:—

Of old things all are over old,  
Of good things none are good enough,  
We'll therefore try if we can mould,  
A world of other stuff.

The attempt to frame a world after their ideas proved a complete failure. One of their chief supporters was a merchant and

\* In *Richards' History of Lynn* we are told that in 1799, "the *Lynn and Wisbech Packet*, and also the Inglorious Income Tax, commenced their progress and operations; the former with far less success than the latter. A great controversy arose soon after, about the termination of the century; one party placing it at the close of this, and the other at the close of the following year: so that the controversy rested on this curious ground—whether or not 99 was equal to 100." The statement as to the issue of the *Lynn and Wisbech Packet* is obviously incorrect, as No. 4, January 28th, 1800; No. 5, February 4th, 1800; and No. 6, February 11th, 1800, are in the possession of the author, and obviously the first issue would be in the first week of 1800, and not in 1799, as stated.

banker, Mr. James Hill, who lived at what was then known as Bank House, the residence on the South Brink, afterwards occupied by Mr. John Gardiner. Some few years previously, during a monetary crisis, the bank, in which Mr. Hill was a partner (James and Thomas Hill), failed under circumstances which are more fully detailed in a subsequent chapter, descriptive of the Banks and their history. The columns of the *Star in the East* record the circumstances of these and other local events of that period, the tone of the paper and the sentiments expressed being of such a character that within a year of its commencement, the *Wisbech Gazette* was started to counteract its baneful influence. The first number of this rival journal appeared on October 14th, 1837, and was published by Mr. William Watts, whose office was in Bridge Street, on the premises now occupied by Mr. Charles Exley. The *Star in the East* taunted its opponent with being an "insignificant publication, which had been launched, not established, because the opinions the older paper had expressed were too ultra." The *Gazette* retorted with pungent accusations of infidelity or of atheistical sentiments against its opponents, and, owing to the rancorous style adopted by its contributors, as well as the difficulties with which newspapers had then to contend, its existence did not last more than six months. It may be remarked that, during the last few weeks of its existence, Mr. John Gardiner came from Leicester to undertake its editorship, and thus obtained his first insight into journalistic work. Born within the sound of Bow Bells, Mr. Gardiner had been up to this time with Mr. Thos. Coombe, of Leicester, a publisher, who afterwards became associated with the Clarendon Press at Oxford, and presented to Keble College, at his own cost, the famous picture by Holman Hunt, "Christ the Light of the World." The *Gazette* ceased to exist in April, 1838, and the *Star in the East* lasted two years longer. Mr. Watts, the publisher of the former paper (who had also printed a History of Wisbech, said to have been by Mr. Thos. Steed Watson, in 1833), afterwards went to America, and died there about 25 years since. Volumes of both the issues of these early Wisbech papers are in the possession of the author, and a perusal of them shows that many of the articles of that day possessed considerable literary merit, as well as preserve interesting records of local history.

Just fifty years ago, on the 2nd of August, 1845, the *Wisbech Advertiser* was launched upon its perilous voyage.\* The *Star in the East* had ceased to exist five years previously, in May, 1840,

\* A copy of the first number is in the Wisbech Museum.

having lived less than four years. With the disastrous experience of the *Star in the East*, and the *Wisbech Gazette*, fresh in the memory, the new venture was not undertaken without feelings of uncertainty as to the issue, and some friends of the founder (Mr. John Gardiner) with the best of motives, and naturally influenced by the chequered lives of its predecessors, discouraged the attempt as likely to be disastrous. To quote John Bunyan's *Apology to the Pilgrim's Progress*:—

Some said, yes print it, others said, not so,  
Some said it might do good, others said, no,  
To prove then, who advised for the best,  
Thus t'was thought to put it to the test.

The *Advertiser* has happily outlived these misgivings, and by attaining its Jubilee in 1895, has proved to be the oldest Wisbech newspaper that has become a permanent adjunct to the history of the town and county during the last half-century. It may, in one sense, lay claim to have been among the first of the cheap press, for when it was commenced in 1845, as a three-halfpenny paper, and subsequently increased to twopence, because of the stamp duty, no other paper is mentioned in *Mitchell's Newspaper Directory* as being published at so low a price. The Cambridge papers were fivepence each, the Norwich papers fourpence halfpenny, except the *Norfolk News*, which was threepence, the *Stamford Mercury* fourpence halfpenny, and the *Lynn Advertiser* fourpence, whilst even the London *Daily News*, which was started six months later, first appeared at the price of fivepence. The papers circulating in Wisbech at the time the *Advertiser* was started, were but little in touch with local occurrences. The prospectus issued on the 1st of July, 1845, intimates that the papers from Norwich, Cambridge, and Stamford, had only a very small circulation in Wisbech, and pointed out the advantages to the public in having a newspaper printed and published in Wisbech, instead of receiving the news from a distance of thirty to sixty miles. The taxes on newspapers in those days were so heavy a burden that it made it a matter of great peril to embark upon such a speculative undertaking. Every proprietor had to give security to the Government authorities for his good behaviour, two bondsmen in £300 being required. Before any advertisement could appear, the duty of 1s. 6d. upon each one, however brief, must be paid to the Government representative; every paper printed must have an impressed penny stamp; and there was a duty of threepence per pound weight on the paper on which it was printed. Then the Clerk of the Peace had



to be formally notified that a printing press and types were about to be erected. Newspapers, in those comparatively unenlightened days, were evidently regarded as dangerous, and, consequently their liberty was restrained by such vexatious restrictions. A document, dated 14th of June, 1845, preserved by the present proprietor, signed by Mr. Hugh Jackson, as Clerk of the Peace, in which the predecessor of the present Clerk of the Peace of nearly similar name, certifies that he has received a notice in writing, that Mr. Gardiner "hath a printing press and types for printing, in the parish of Wisbech St. Peter," and which is required to be entered pursuant to an Act for "the more effectual suppression of Societies, established for seditious and treasonable practices."\*

Having obtained this permission, a Columbian printing press was forthwith erected, and it was decided to issue the *Advertiser* once a month. There were two reasons for issuing it monthly—first, that it was deemed prudent not to be too venturesome in view of the difficulties to be met, and secondly, because it was thought by the proprietor that a monthly publication could appear without the impressed stamp, which was required by weekly or daily journals. With that idea, the first number, an eight page issue of folio size, came out on August 2nd, 1845, at the very reasonable charge of three halfpence, and without any red stamp upon it. What terrible audacity! No sooner had the first number seen the light, than Mr. Timm, the vigilant solicitor under the Stamps and Taxes Act, informed the proprietor that heavy penalties had been incurred in publishing the paper without being stamped, and that future impressions must rigidly comply with the law.† Mr. Gardiner tried to convince the solicitor that

\* The certificate, which it was in those days, necessary to obtain from the Clerk of the Peace, is as follows:—I, Hugh Jackson, Clerk of the Peace for the Isle of Ely, do hereby certify that John Gardiner, of Wisbech Saint Peter, in the Isle of Ely and County of Cambridge, hath delivered to me a notice in writing appearing to be signed by him and attested by William Thirkel as a witness to his signing the same, that he the said John Gardiner hath a Printing Press and Types for printing, which he proposes to use for Printing, within the Parish of Wisbech Saint Peter, and which he has required to be entered pursuant to an Act passed in the thirty-ninth year of the reign of His Majesty King George the Third, intituled "an Act for the more effectual suppression of Societies established for Seditious and Treasonable purposes, and for better preventing Treasonable and Seditious practices." Witness my hand this fourteenth day of June, One thousand eight hundred and forty-five. Hugh Jackson, Clerk of the Peace for the Isle of Ely."

† 16th George II., c. 26, sect. 5. "If any person shall hawk, carry about, utter or expose to sale any newspapers, &c., not stamped according to law, it shall be lawful for any Justice of the Peace, upon conviction of the offender, either by his own confession, or by the oath of one or more witness or witnesses,

his method of publication was justified by the Act, but in vain, and it was deemed prudent not to resist his dictum. It was, however, a remarkable vindication of the proprietor's contention in this matter that, five years later, this very point was decided by the Court of Exchequer, in his favour, in a case arising out of the issue of "Charles Dickens' Household Narrative," and the *Advertiser*, making use of this decision, from that time, as a monthly publication, was fully released from stamp duty. In the meantime, however, the addition of the stamp duty had been a serious incubus to the *Advertiser*, necessitating the increase of the price, at first, to twopence per copy, until November, 1847, and afterwards to twopence halfpenny, in order to meet the heavy liabilities to which newspapers had to submit.\* Under those circumstances, the *Advertiser* made slow progress for some years, but the energy and discretion with which it was managed and edited by its founder, who had acquired Taylor's system of shorthand, and by his studious habits fitted himself for the editorial duties, enabled it to weather the storm and obtain for itself the support of an increasing circle of friends and subscribers.

But the barriers erected by fear and prejudice in the way of newspaper enterprise were only gradually and slowly overthrown. It took a quarter of a century, though the persistent labours of the Society for the Abolition of the Taxes on Knowledge to remove the obnoxious imposts were ultimately successful. The year 1853 saw the total abolition of the advertisement duty. "Many a time," writes an old member of our staff, "have I heard an argument between the proprietor of the *Advertiser* and the stately old Capt. Schultz respecting the number of advertisements which should pay the duty of 1s. 6d. (previous to 1833 it was 3s. 6d.) to the Government. In 1855 the Stamp Act was repealed, permitting the printing of newspapers without the penny stamp, but retaining it for postal purposes. This enabled the *Advertiser* to appear more

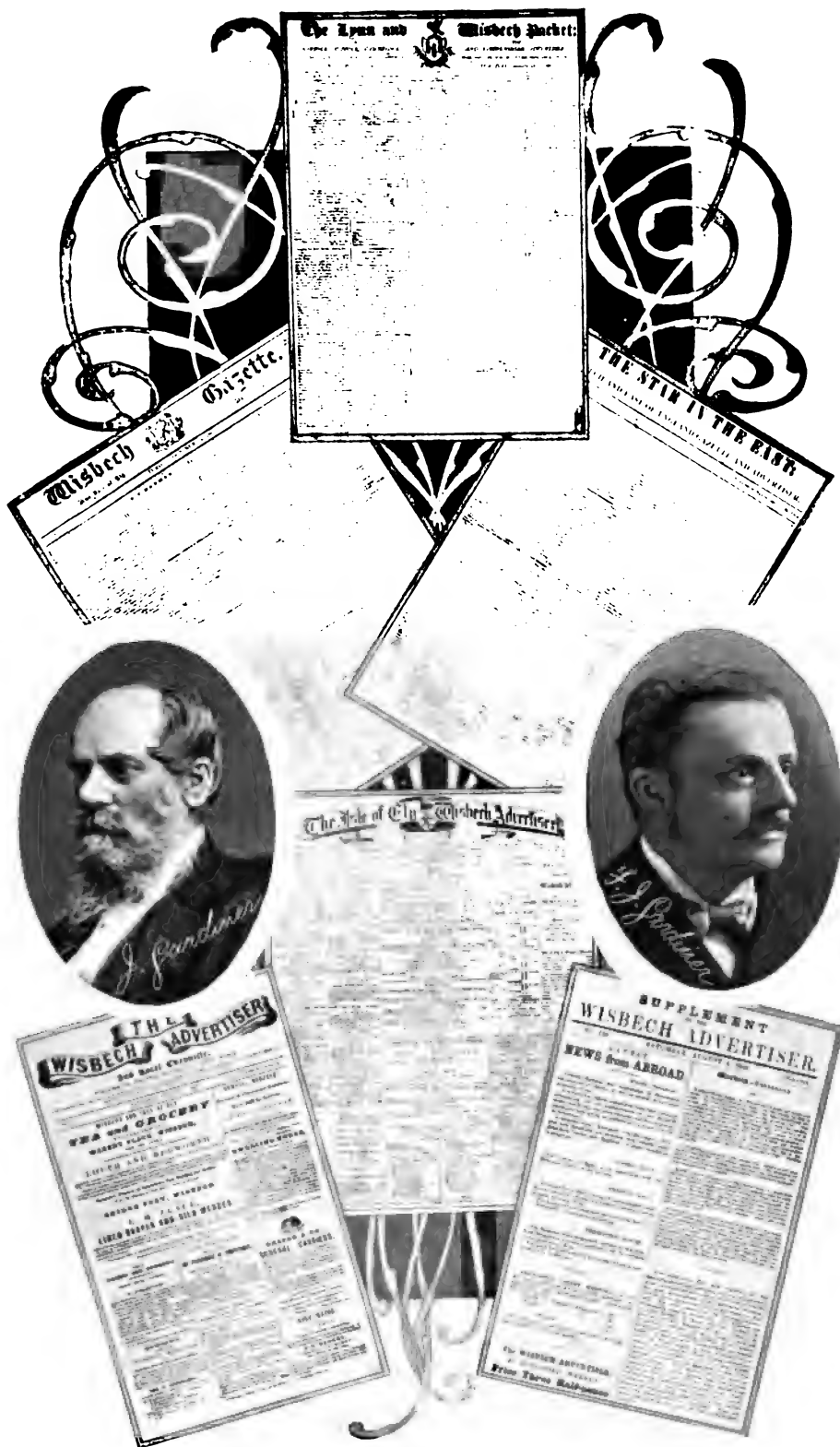
to commit such offender to the House of Correction for any time not exceeding three months, and any person may seize and carry any such offender before a Justice of the Peace, who upon producing a certificate of such conviction, under the hand of the Justice of the Peace, is entitled to a reward of Twenty Shillings, to be paid by the Receiver General of the Stamp Duties." Even almanacs formerly had to bear a penny stamp if printed on one side only, and twopence if on more than one side. A sheet almanac called the Cambridge Almanac, dated 1781, price fivepence, which is in our possession, had such a stamp at one corner. The stamp duty dated from 1711, at which time it was intended to crush out the periodical press.

\* On October 5th, 1847, the *Spalding Free Press* was published by the late Mr. Henry Watkinson, who wrote in 1890 as follows:—"My valued friend, the late Mr. John Gardiner, persuaded me to start a Spalding paper in 1847."

frequently, viz., weekly instead of monthly. In August of the same year too, just ten years after the paper had started, the first *Supplement* was issued, containing the thrilling news of the Crimean war, the siege of Sebastopol, &c., which were then creating so intense an interest. At first the *Supplement* was issued irregularly, when important news transpired, but in 1859 these issues became permanent, in order to supply the markets and other intelligence, a four-page sheet being gratuitously supplied under the title of the *Market Telegraph*. After a protracted constitutional struggle between the House of Lords and the House of Commons, the paper duty was abolished on Oct. 3rd, 1861. The removal of the tax on paper was the beginning of our penny press, the freest in the world. Speaking of the abolition of the paper duty, Mr. Gladstone subsequently said:—"Economically, it was the abolition of a mischievous, almost a barbarous, impost. Never was there a measure that called into so vivid, energetic, permanent, and successful action the cheap press of the country. To the most numerous classes of the community it was like a new light, a new epoch in life, when they found that the information upon public affairs that had once been the exclusive property of the higher, with the middle class, gave them a new interest in the affairs of their country, and a new attachment to these institutions." The proprietor decided at once to give the public the benefit of the concession, the price of the *Advertiser* being reduced from three halfpence to a penny.

During the last thirty-four years, various enlargements and improvements have been made in the paper, the most important being that at the commencement of the Jubilee Year of Queen Victoria, which was signalled by the present proprietor (who had succeeded to the editorship in October, 1883, on the decease of the founder) converting it from a four-page into an eight-page paper, under the more comprehensive title of the *Isle of Ely and Wisbech Advertiser*.\* New plant, comprising faster machinery, has been added to meet the growing circulation. In the time of the old Columbian press, worked by hand, the first employé was once able to produce 300 copies per hour for four consecutive hours, a feat which was considered to "beat the record," but

\* The *Advertiser* of June 23rd, 1887, was a notable issue, containing not only a description of the proceedings of the Jubilee of Queen Victoria at Wisbech (which are described elsewhere), but giving an engraving of the dinner on Wisbech Market Place, at the Coronation of Queen Victoria, on June 28th, 1838, and a four-page "extra" with a narration of the chief events of the Queen's reign, accompanied by Her Majesty's portrait. For this issue there was a very large demand.



#### WISBECH NEWSPAPERS OF THE PRESENT CENTURY.

*Lynn and Wisbech Packet*, Jan. 28th, 1800.

*The Star in the East*, Sept. 17th, 1836.

*Wisbech Gazette*, Oct. 14th, 1837.

*Wisbech Advertiser* (first copy), Aug. and, 1845.

*Isle of Ely and Wisbech Advertiser* (first enlarged issue), Jan. 5th, 1888.

Supplement to *Wisbech Advertiser*, Aug. 4th, 1855.

Portrait of John Gardiner, founder of *Wisbech Advertiser*.

Portrait of Frederic J. Gardiner, present proprietor and author of the

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what would then have been thought, if the marvellous developments of to-day in steam printing could have been foreseen, with its rapid reproduction of many thousands of copies. During the last fifty years, some fifteen or sixteen papers have been started at different times, but the majority of these have ceased to exist. Among the papers which have been published in Wisbech during the present century, with the date of their origin, are the following:—*Lynn and Wisbech Packet*, 1800; *Wisbech Observer*, 1813; *Star in the East*, 1836-1840; *Wisbech Gazette*, 1837-1838; *Wisbech Railway Advertiser* (Goddard's) 1849; *Wisbech Observer and Local Chronicle*, 1852; *Record*, 1852; *Wisbech Journal*, 1854; *March Telegram and Isle of Ely Advertiser*, 1858; *East Anglian News and Wisbech Dispatch*, 1859; *Lynn and Wisbech Times*, 1861; *Wisbech Mirror*, 1869-1874; *Wisbech Daily Telegram*, April to Sept., 1877; *Wisbech Times*, 1883. These fourteen papers have ceased to exist, and the *Advertiser and Telegraph* are the only papers now printed in the town, the *Standard* emanating from March, and the *North Cambs. Echo* (formerly the *Wisbech Chronicle*) from Lynn. A notable venture was the *Daily Telegram*, a halfpenny morning paper which started in April, 1877, but scarcely lasted five months. The attempt to establish a regular daily issue proved a failure, although when matters of great interest have arisen, such as the hearing of Dock or River Improvement Bills before a Parliamentary Committee, the *Advertiser* has often issued daily editions giving the proceedings of each day.

The Jubilee of the *Isle of Ely and Wisbech Advertiser* was completed on the 2nd of August, 1895, and to this event, the present work really owes its origin. The author, desiring to publish some record of the past fifty years' events, commenced to arrange the material for a small *brochure*, commemorative of the completion of half a century of journalism. On investigation, there appeared to be so many occurrences that obviously deserved something more than a passing reference, and which it would be interesting to retain in a more permanent and accessible form than the bound volumes of a newspaper, that the task of compiling an historical work of this kind was at last undertaken, though with many misgivings, and not without the hope that the numerous demands of a busy journalistic life, would be permitted to atone for any deficiencies and errors that might result from recording events, sometimes beyond the memory of the writer.

In looking back upon the last half century, it ought to be fully and generously acknowledged that there are many who have been associated with the *Advertiser* to whom credit is due,

beside the late proprietor and Mr. H. T. Gardiner, now of the *Watford Leader*, who was for many years associated with its management. One of the earliest members of its staff was Mr. Robert Haselwood, who now holds a responsible position in Messrs J. and J. Colman's works at Carrow, Norwich, and is one of the managers of the *Norfolk News*, *Eastern Daily Press*, and other papers associated with Norwich journalistic enterprise. Mr. William Digby, C.I.E., who received one of the first decorations of the Order of the Indian Empire, for his energy in the administration of the Madras Famine Fund, and has rendered important services to India (although as yet unsuccessful in his two attempts to enter Parliament), was for some years attached to the staff of the *Advertiser*; as were also Mr. Thomas Lee, editor of the *Isle of Wight County Press*; Mr. Thomas J. Bennett, joint proprietor of the *Times of India*, published at Bombay; the Rev. C. E. Plumb, B.A., Tutor of St. Aidan's College, Birkenhead; Mr. Edward Rickett, with the publishing house of Mr. John Heywood, Manchester; Mr. W. H. Spencer, of the *Selby Express*; Mr. Walter Mawer, F.G.S., editor of a manual of Physiography, as well as other scientific works; Mr. F. A. Baker, Barnstaple, etc., are among those who, receiving their early training in connection with this journal, have honourably filled their respective stations in life. Among its earlier contributors was Mr. Alfred Ewen Fletcher, the late able editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, London, and now of the *New Age*, whose first literary effort was published in the columns of the *Advertiser*; the late Mr. John Algernon Clarke, editor of *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, author of a prize essay on Agriculture in Lincolnshire, and special agricultural correspondent for the *Times*, also contributed a series of "Fen Sketches," which were afterwards published from the *Advertiser* office in book form. In recognising the help that these and many others, not forgetting our present staff, have given in days gone past to the present time, the beginning of another half century is entered upon with the hopeful anticipation that this journal may not be less deserving of the support of its many kind and trusty friends, and that it may ever be found ready to help—

The wrong that needs resistance,  
The right that lacks assistance,  
For the future in the distance,  
And the good that it may do.

## CHAPTER V.

COACHING DAYS, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF  
RAILWAYS AND TRAMWAYS.

STORY is told of Admiral Swaine, a distinguished naval officer, and subsequently High Bailiff of the Isle of Ely, who died at Wisbech in 1848, which illustrates the condition of the Fen roads in the early part of the nineteenth century. He would often narrate it to his grandchildren when they gathered around him, to listen to his adventures, of which he had had no lack, for he had travelled round the world on a voyage of discovery with Vancouver. One afternoon, he and his family started in a grand coach drawn by four horses, from his residence at Leverington, all dressed in their best attire, in readiness for a ball—light silk stockings, delicate shoes, buckles at the knees, fine frilled shirts, and pea-green coats—such was the costume of those days for evening assemblies. Suddenly, as the carriage was jolting somewhat heavily over the rough roads, down went the vehicle into a great hole! The horses tugged and strained in vain—so stockings and shoes notwithstanding—all the party had to alight on the miry road, and wait in the muddy surroundings until a messenger, hastening over a ploughed field, summoned some men to lift the carriage out and set it on the road once more. This done, the party proceeded on its journey, arriving late for the ball, though not in the spick-and-span condition in which they had left home. But, of late years, roads have greatly improved, and travellers are not now subject to such incon-



veniences as were common in those days. Occasionally in winter, when the snow was deep on the ground, the journey from London was much prolonged, and the exhausted horses had sometimes great difficulty at the end of their journey in dragging the coach up the steep incline of the Stone Bridge at Wisbech, on its way to the White Hart Hotel, which was one of the coaching houses of that day. The passengers would alight, and other assistance would be given to relieve the exhausted team of the heavily weighted vehicle. Now and again a coach would be overturned on the road, as was the case in 1847, when two four-horse vehicles left the Rose and Crown Hotel, full of supporters of Coke and Hamond (two of the Parliamentary candidates for West Norfolk), on their way to Swaffham to augment the show of hands which was always taken in those days after the nomination on the hustings. The postilion of one coach took a wrong turn outside Swaffham, and trying to repair his error, brought his horses round too sharply, with the result that the vehicle swung over with a terrible crash. Of the seventeen outside and four inside passengers, two or three Walsoken and Wisbech people sustained serious injuries. It is amusing to read that two hundred years ago, the running of coaches to London was discouraged by many persons, because it was a temptation to ladies and gentlemen to travel to town, and to spend their money and time in extravagance and pleasure. Travelling by coach, on a fine summer's day, was a very pleasurable experience, but in winter, delays and mishaps were more likely to occur. Even when railways were extending over the country, there was so great a prejudice against the "draughty trains" and the cumbrous locomotives, that some of the coach proprietors cherished the hope that they might successfully match their fine teams of horses and smart vehicles against the primitive engines and open-sided carriages, of which they spoke in contemptuous terms.

No mention is made of Wisbech in a copy of *Bradshaw's Railway Guide* of April, 1842, which contains coloured maps indicating the few lines then in existence. Some half-dozen places between Shoreditch station, London, and Romford, Essex, are all that are indicated on the plan of the Eastern Counties Railway. It was not until March, 1843, that the Eastern Counties Railway having been declared "sound and complete" as far as Colchester, was used for purposes of transit to that place, the first passenger train taking two hours and forty minutes to accomplish fifty miles. In the following year, the Newcastle and Darlington Railway was opened, establishing direct com-

munication between London and Newcastle. The first train contained Mr. George Stephenson, C.E., Mr. John Bright, M.P., and the Hon. H. Liddell, M.P. Three hundred miles were accomplished in ten to twelve hours, a marvellous feat in those days. From Wisbech, London was reached by the stage coach to Bishop Stortford, the nearest station on the Eastern Counties line, and at a later period, when the line was completed as far as Ely, the Defiance coach used to leave the Rose and Crown and White Hart Hotels, at nine o'clock in the morning, to catch the first train at Ely, by which the passengers were able to arrive in London at 3-30 p.m. This was thought to be very good travelling, the distance being accomplished in six to seven hours, at a cost of 27s. inside the coach and first class railway, and 17s. 6d. outside and second class. But a new era was beginning to dawn, for when in 1845 the railway mania awakened speculation throughout the country, Wisbech became infected with the fever, less from its own eagerness to invest, than from the overtures made to the Corporation by promoters of imaginary lines, who bewildered the authorities by their numerous, and in many cases, impossible projects. Of this mania of 1845, which showed some of the characteristics of the South Sea Bubble of a century and a quarter earlier, it was said—

The country was in a high fever of railway speculation. The stockbrokers' offices were crowded with eager, sometimes frantic, buyers and sellers. Nearly everyone bought "scrip," sold it, and speculated again in a whirl of rashness and excitement. Quotations were clamoured for, allotments demanded, and the struggle was that of a gambler's greed for a gambler's reward. Shares to the amount of £100,000 would be sold in one day. Lines were devised on paper, and the reasons given for making them were often far-fetched. George Hudson, "the Railway King," as he was called, was at the height of his influence. From a linen draper's assistant at York, he rose to have the practical control of a thousand miles of railway, though he ultimately died poor, because too ambitious and grasping.

"King Hudson," as he was called, visited Wisbech at a later period, in connection with railway business, and it may be remarked that, for several years, until comparatively recently, his son, who was a Government Factory Inspector, was in the habit of periodically visiting this town.

The numerous schemes submitted to the approval of the Corporation, at the latter end of 1845, caused no little embarrassment to that body, anxious as its members were to advance the prosperity of the borough, at the same time that they jealously safeguarded its interests. No less than eight lines were announced

in that year, for which the support of Wisbech was sought, viz.; St. Ives and Wisbech line; Isle of Ely and Lincolnshire Junction; Wisbech to March; Wisbech to Spalding; the Grand Union; Stamford to Wisbech by Deeping; Peterborough and Lynn; and the East Coast line. A decided objection was expressed to any railway being carried across the river, between the town and the sea, owing to the obstruction of a bridge to the navigation, and the attention of the Corporation was particularly directed in the various official enquiries that took place, to preventing this. Of the sites proposed for the various stations, that on the South Brink, next the late Rev. T. P. Holmes' residence, was most in favour as a central position, the plan embracing a proposed bridge to cross the Nene at that point, and join the North and South Brinks. The latter part of the scheme was never accomplished, although, be it remarked, in accordance with Railway powers obtained, an iron bridge intended to span the river between Mr. Holmes' house and the Low, was actually cast, but never erected. The first passenger station was on the South Brink; but it was afterwards moved to the wooden building erected by the East Anglian Railway in New Wisbech. Until the line was made from March to Ely and Peterborough, and afterwards to Wisbech, the coach or sociable was the only means of conveying passengers and mails.

The earliest railway to Wisbech, which was from St. Ives, *viâ* March, was opened on the 1st of May, 1847. Wisbech had realized that it was high time to choose her own lines, and to hunt the speculators, who were only advancing their own interests, out of the field. But whilst the lines advocated by the Corporation were worsted in the conflict, one proposed by Mr. Day, a solicitor at St. Ives, called the Wisbech and St. Ives line,\* crept through Parliament unexpectedly, and Wisbech then backed it. The preamble was declared to be proved on September 1st, 1846, and subsequently the Eastern Counties Railway purchased this line as an adjunct to their Lynn and Peterborough line (which was opened in the following January), paying £4 for every £2 of deposit money. Its construction to March was immediately commenced, and progressed so rapidly that on the 30th April, 1847, Col. Coddington, Surveyor-General of Railway, accompanied by Mr. C. P. Roney, secretary to the Company; Mr. S. M. Peto, and Mr. McKeone, contractors; Mr. Samuels, engineer; and others officially inspected the line, and afterwards

\* The trains on the Huntingdon and St. Ives branch were at first worked by horse-power.—*Personal Recollections by a Lynn Sexagenarian.*

were entertained at a luncheon at the Rose and Crown Hotel. The line was used on the next day (May-day), but the formal opening was deferred, at the instance of the Mayor, until Monday, May 3rd, when business was suspended in the town, and an excursion was arranged to March, Ely, and Cambridge, leaving Wisbech from the South Brink station, at 9 a.m., the number of tickets issued being limited. The return third-class fare to Cambridge was only 2s. 6d., and reference is made in the local paper to "the inconveniences and expense so long felt by the old modes of conveyances now partially superseded."

Wisbech thus obtained communication with all the great thoroughfare lines in the kingdom. In the meantime, Lynn having obtained an Act for a railway from Ely, a branch from Watlington to Wisbech was included in its powers. Of this line *Walker and Craddock's History* said, "It can only be denominated as a mistake. Its track is through a bare fen, and its termination at Watlington leaves the traveller seven miles from Lynn, and further from Ely. The country, on the contrary, which lies between Wisbech and Lynn is highly populous, and requires accommodation, whereas by the authorised line there is not a single village, and Lynn is about five miles further off than it need to be." This line, called the East Anglian Branch Railway, was opened on the 1st February, 1848, completing the communication with Lynn, the station being in New Wisbech, on the site of the present more commodious erection.

It may be remarked that in the following June, a coach commenced to run between Lynn and Hunstanton, and visitors to that primitive seaside village, could leave Hunstanton as late as seven p.m., and catch the nine p.m. train to Wisbech. Peterborough experienced the benefit of railway communication nearly two years earlier than Wisbech, the first line to reach the city being the Northampton and Peterborough section from Blisworth, of the London and North-Western Railway, opened on June 2nd, 1845. At that time the population of Peterborough was about 4,000, and the nearest connection with London was 110 miles, which the opening of the Great Eastern line reduced to 99 miles, and of the Great Northern in 1850 to 76 miles.

Both the Eastern Counties and the Great Northern Companies were now bidding for the support of Wisbech in their projects. The Great Northern Company proposed to replace the first bridge at Sutton Bridge, previously called Sutton "Wash," built of wood (chiefly oak) in 1830, which had always been looked upon as an obstruction in the river, and to erect one that would not

hinder navigation or drainage, for their Spalding to Lynn line. But Wisbech disliked the idea of a railway over the Nene at Sutton Bridge, which was regarded as calculated to ruin the river trade, and consequently the Eastern Counties were more in favour with the Corporation. Both the Eastern Counties and Great Northern Railways proposed to construct docks at Wisbech, the former twelve acres in extent, the latter five acres. But the Great Northern made a much more determined bid to win Wisbech support, when it submitted a plan, known as the "Back Cut" scheme, proposing to convert the existing channel through the town into a dock, and cutting a new straight river from the site of the old South Brink Toll-bar to the river at the Horse Shoe, for both drainage and navigation purposes. This was intended to defeat the Eastern Counties scheme for constructing docks near the town, as the new cut would go completely through the land scheduled for the purpose by that Company. But after a determined struggle in Parliament, the Great Northern scheme was defeated, the opposition to their crossing of the river overthrowing the Bill, and the Eastern Counties line to Long Sutton, Holbeach, and Spalding, was passed, though it was afterwards abandoned.

On the 1st of March, 1848, a month after the completion of the Wisbech and Watlington line, the Wisbech, St. Ives, and Cambridge Junction line, commemorated its completion by running a free excursion for children of the St. Ives and Chatteris Schools. Unfortunately, the 800 adults and children who travelled to Wisbech by it, failed to enjoy the liberality of the Eastern Counties Company, for it rained in torrents all day. In those days the carriages afforded but indifferent shelter from the inclemency of the weather, and, especially in the case of excursion trains, they were little, if any better than cattle trucks, without roof, or even if roofed, open at the sides, so that travelling by rail was not always better than by coach. Luggage was very uncertain in its movements, and not unfrequently was missing for several days. If compensation was sought for loss of luggage, the railways in one instance at least, advised a Wisbech passenger to make application to the guard—a convenient way of shelving their liability! Accidents were not unfrequent, trains were very slow, so slow that *Punch* once said, "even Eastern Counties trains must come in at last," and Wisbechians paid them the doubtful compliment of saying that they were as slow as the Wisbech church clock, which was then out of repair. People would even denominate them as "the nasty railways," but this

prejudice was gradually overcome, though for a long time, travellers disliked them, and tried to revive the old sociables for short distances. The terms used on the railways were somewhat different to the present day, trains were then described as "fast," the term "express" not having come into use, carriages were called "glass coaches," places were "booked," as was the case in the coaching days, and it was announced that "first-class trains stop at first-class stations." As to the luggage, it was placed on the top of the coach in which passengers rode, and for Manchester, Liverpool, or the larger stations, was very often not disturbed until it reached its destination.

The effect of the railways upon the shipping trade of the port may be judged from the fact, that the exports and imports of Wisbech reached the highest point in 1847, viz., 167,443 tons, but diminished by one-half, to 88,082 tons, eight years later. Up to 1862, the railways in East Anglia practically belonged to five different companies, viz.:—The Eastern Counties, the Eastern Union, the Norfolk, the East Anglian, and the Newmarket, and the competition between them became so fierce, that feeling rather than judgment actuated to a considerable extent their policy. None of the five companies were really successful, although in the 1836 report of the Eastern Counties Railway, it was stated that a dividend of at least twenty-two per cent. might be expected! Notwithstanding these roseate anticipations, it was long before the Eastern Counties line, now known as the Great Eastern, gained the confidence of the public. Mismanagement and embarrassed finances, accompanied by stormy meetings of shareholders, characterised its earlier days, and not until about the time that the present Marquis of Salisbury became chairman, did the tide really turn. It may be said that the history of the Great Eastern line is the record of a victory, won by the improved management and persevering development of its resources. Forty years ago, the Company had become such a by-word for dilatoriness, that a costermonger humorously offered to race one of the trains with his barrow, whilst such were its financial difficulties that some of the engines and rolling stock were seized for debt.\* Now the line is prosperous and well-managed, with a growing revenue, and increasing dividends. The ordinary stock of the Company which, at one time, was as low as £34 or £36 per

\* Its fortune had ebbed so low, that the line and plant were seized by the sheriff in execution, and each of the few trains that were run was plastered with ignominious labels, and accompanied by a "man in possession."—*Personal Recollections by a Lynn Sexagenarian.*

£100, is now above par (£105), and appears likely to go still higher. The Parliamentary struggle between the Great Eastern and Great Northern competing lines, resulted in the construction and opening of the March and Doncaster Joint line worked by the two Companies, and subsequently extended to York, an advance that largely developed the area of the Great Eastern Company's business, and increased its Continental traffic. Conspicuous improvements have been made in the plant, as well as in the permanent way, and its organization has lately been characterised by an enterprise and smartness never before known in its history. The Company has works at Stratford, where a goods engine, with its tender, weighing nearly seventy tons, was constructed, painted, and had steam up in the short space of ten hours, and has ever since been engaged in the coal service between London and Peterborough. At present the coal traffic is three million tons a year, and with access to the Midland coal-fields, by the Lancashire, Derbyshire, and East Coast Railway, this quantity is likely to increase materially. What the suburban traffic through its large Metropolitan extension has become, may be inferred from the fact that not far short of 100,000 passengers arrive at or depart, in one day, from Liverpool Street station, which has been greatly enlarged, at enormous expense, to meet the increased demands lately made upon it.

Of the old turnpike roads in the neighbourhood a word or two may be said. From an Act of Parliament, in black letter, passed in the reign of George II., and dated 1730, entitled "An Act for making a new Road, and for repairing and amending the antient Road, between the towns of Wisbech and March in the Isle of Ely, in the County of Cambridge," we find that the highway

From March Chain to Guyhorn, in length about three miles, is become exceedingly dangerous and almost impassable, occasioned by the great numbers of cattle driven, and large quantities of other provisions carried thereby to the markets at London, and elsewhere, and whereas a nearer and much more commodious road may be made between the said towns of Wisbech and March at a small expense, from a certain place called March Common to Guyhorn aforesaid, to the end therefore, and that the Highway aforesaid may be forthwith effectually made, repaired, and amended, and from time to time kept in good repair, etc., trustees are nominated for putting the Act into execution.

Turnpikes were authorised to be erected, and the tolls are specified for any "Coach, Berlin, Chariot, Calash, Chaise,



**WISBECH AND UPWELL STEAM TRAMWAY,  
AND AN OLD TOLL-BAR.**

BRAUPRE HALL, OUTWELL.      WISBECH AND UPWELL TRAM ON ELM ROAD.  
LEVERINGTON ROAD TOLL-BAR (NOW ABOLISHED).



THE N  
PUBLIC  
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Chair, Waggon, Wain, Cart, or other Carriage," as well as for animals. Among the exemptions specified were vehicles going to or returning from any place of worship on Sundays, or with any corpse to be interred at any church, or for any post-horse carrying the mail or packet, or soldiers passing on their march, or for horses and carts travelling with vagrants sent by passes, or for materials in making the highways in neighbouring parishes, or hay, manure, corn, and straw, implements of husbandry required by adjacent lands, etc. No toll was chargeable to voters on the day or days on which an election for a Knight of the Shire for Cambridgeshire or Huntingdonshire took place. The turnpike gate on the South Brink was opposite to Messrs Elgood's brewery on the south side of the river.

The disappearance of the old turnpike gates, which were numerous around Wisbech, deserves a passing remark. Throughout the country, toll was exacted from vehicles, &c., making use of the roads, and in the earlier days of velocipedes, even the bicycles were often called upon to pay the demand.\* Sam Weller, in *Pickwick*, asserts that his father held the theory that a man, when he had become a downright hater of his fellow mortals, took to keeping a toll-bar. There was often much grumbling at the old toll gates, especially at night when the belated traveller occasionally found it very difficult to arouse the "watchman" from his slumbers, and would sit shivering in the cold night air till he opened the gate and let him through. The earliest of the toll-bars in this neighbourhood to be removed, were those on the Barton Road and at Thorney. On November 1st, 1880, the Wisbech and Thorney Turnpike Trust expired, having been extended to that date by special Act of Parliament. Since that time, the approaches to Wisbech have been gradually abolished and freed from the demands of the toll-keeper.† The Lynn and

\* At one toll-gate, near Wisbech, where tickets were given as a receipt for toll, bicycles, being then a novelty, for want of a better denomination were described in the receipt demanded, under the head of "asses, &c!"

† One of the old toll-keepers on the Leverington Road, Mr. Marshall George Strapps, of Wisbech, employed his leisure time in acquiring the art of wood-carving, and although entirely self-taught, he has produced work which is highly creditable to his industry and perseverance. The Bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Kaye, was one of his first patrons, and since that time Sir Charles Anderson, Bart., the late Mr. Jon. Peckover, the Lord Lieutenant of Cambs. (Mr. Alex. Peckover) have given him commissions. One of his larger works was a handsome carved oak chair, the panels illustrating the Life of Christ, which was sold for £150, to go to Australia. The model of Ely Cathedral, constructed by Mr. Strapps and his son, was a marvel of industry and skilful workmanship. It was made of English oak, 300 years old, taken from the axis of the Windmill, which had stood for

Walsoken Roads; the Leverington Road and Pickard's Lane; the Elm Road and South Brink Gates, have all been successively abolished, and each parish was made liable for the maintenance of its roads, the main arteries of communication being now under the control and management of the County authority. That the freedom of the town of toll, of another kind, was considered a great advantage in ancient times, is testified by a brass plate on a monumental stone in the parish church of Wisbech. Richard I. had granted the tenants of the Wisbech Barton Manor an exemption from toll in all fairs or markets in England, which grant was confirmed by King John, and renewed by Henry IV. The privilege was afterwards forfeited, and restored through the exertions of Nicholas Sandford, who died on October 3rd, 1608, and over whose grave was inscribed the following couplet:—

He was  
A patterne for townsmen whom we may enrole,  
For at his own charge, this towne he free'd of tole.

That the last fifty years has revolutionised the means of transit in this neighbourhood is evident from the fact, that we have to-day three of the great railway systems running into Wisbech. An excellent service of trains, the erection of a new and commodious station by the Great Eastern Railway Company, in place of the inadequate wooden structure with only one platform, which had done duty for so many years, together with the provision of branch harbour lines on both sides of the river, in direct communication with the wharves, have placed Wisbech in a position to carry on its commercial business with facility.

The Midland Railway obtained access to Wisbech by acquiring running powers over the Peterborough, Wisbech, and Sutton Bridge line, which having purchased Sutton Bridge from the Limited Company owning it, obtained powers to carry its line across the river in spite of the opposition of the Corporation to the scheme. The line has since been purchased by the Midland and Great Northern Joint Companies, and those com-

generations on the Roman bank at Leverington. The model was a faithful copy of the noble edifice, made to scale, and of the 340 windows, 100 contained stained glass. The effect, when lighted up, and a small "organ" playing inside, was very striking. This model was also sent to Australia. More recently Mr. Strapps has made a massive frame, illustrating incidents in Mr. Gladstone's career, and several of Sir David Wilkie's works have been copied, five medals having been awarded to him at Exhibitions in London, Norwich, Wisbech, and elsewhere, for meritorious work. Mr. Strapps, who was formerly a postman, and custodian of the Wisbech Institute, has now retired from active life, but is a collector of coins and curios of various kinds.

panies have greatly improved its service of express through trains. In order to meet the increased traffic, powers have recently been obtained to replace the old Sutton Bridge by a new one, now nearly completed, and this will greatly facilitate the traffic arrangements at this point. At the present time both bridges are in existence, but as soon as the new one, which has a double roadway for railway and ordinary traffic, side by side, is in use, the old one will be removed.

The Great Eastern has laid down within the last few years a Light Railway between Wisbech, Outwell, and Upwell, traversing a fertile agricultural district. Two or three attempts had been made to obtain an ordinary railway to Upwell, and through Mr. W. L. Ollard's energy, Parliamentary powers were once obtained, but were subsequently allowed to expire. The Great Eastern Railway then resolved to make the tramway as an experiment. It was, in the first instance, intended to have brought the tram-line through the town, as far as the Market Place opening, but in consequence of the difficulties in the way, this part of the scheme was abandoned. The line, as far as the village of Outwell, was opened in August, 1883, after official inspection, and a little more than a year later—on September 8th, 1884, was completed the full distance, to Upwell. The tramway, at the Wisbech end, has its terminus at the Great Eastern Railway station. The line is of the normal gauge, and runs upon the high road for a great portion of the way, except where distance can be advantageously saved. The engine is covered in, so that horses on the road may not be alarmed by it, and a speed of eight miles per hour is attainable. The tram takes up or sets down passengers at any part of the line, upon the signal being given by the conductor. The length of the line is  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles, and the cost of construction, apart from rolling stock, was £2,284 per mile, the revenue for the half-year ending December, 1894, being £1,287, slightly less than the corresponding half of the previous year. Financially it does not directly make an adequate return for the expenditure, although the working expenses are low, but indirectly it is most useful, and probably remunerative as a feeder of main line traffic, whilst it has improved materially the district which it serves. The line is one of which the Great Eastern Railway Company is reasonably proud, and it was recently mentioned and illustrated in the *Daily Graphic*, as a typical light railway running through an agricultural district. At Board of Trade conferences, and at meetings held to urge the desirability of constructing light railways, it has been

often referred to as an example of the utility of such lines in rural districts in order to develop passenger and goods traffic, and as a feeder to the main lines. That the line has admirably answered the purpose for which it was intended will be generally conceded, and although running along the high road, the few accidents that have occurred, have been mainly owing to non-observance of the regulations under which it is worked. The Terrington and Walpole Tramway, which at one time appeared likely to open up more direct communications with the agricultural and fruit-growing district situated between Wisbech and Lynn, has come to an untimely end. Although an Act of Parliament was obtained by the late Mr. David Ward and Messrs. Easton and Co., at an expense of something over £1,000, the railway companies have not taken the scheme in hand, as was hoped would be the case, and after a lapse of four years the guarantors have been called upon to meet a deficiency of about £400, so that there is now no prospect of any further effort being made to carry the undertaking through. The proposed tramway might have been a useful feeder to the Midland and Great Northern Joint Line, from Terrington station, if it could have been carried through at a reasonable outlay. It is evident that in view of the conference recently held by the Board of Trade, and the Light Railways' Bill before Parliament, such communications appear likely to be regarded as important factors in the distributing machinery of the country. The improvement of our main roads, the abolition of toll-bars, and the extended use of vehicles of every kind, are additional evidences of the importance attached to more rapid and ready means of communication between town and village. On the excellently kept and level Fen roads, cycles, which travel at great speed, are ridden by men and women of all ages, and even the auto-car, and the new road-skates may become one of the modern modes of locomotion. Such a possibility as the development of cycling, must have been foreseen, one would think, by Shakespeare, when he wrote—

Then comes the time who lives to see't,  
That going shall be used with feet.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE CORPORATION OF WISBECH AND ITS INSIGNIA.



THE founding of the Guild of the Holy Trinity at Wisbech, in 1379, a fraternity which, at its dissolution, led to the incorporation of the town, was an important event in the history of the borough. This guild was a religious community, instituted to provide daily masses, the emoluments of the officiating priests, altar decorations, and such funeral and other observances as the poorer classes in those days thought to be necessary, and could only obtain by the combination of their small gifts. The society was known by the name of "The Guild or Fraternity of the Holy Trinity in Wysbech," and was governed by an Alderman, two officers called Scabini, or Stewards, a Clerk, Dean, Hostilarius, the last-named a hall steward to assist at entertainments, as well as several less responsible officials. There were eight other guilds in addition to that of the Holy Trinity, to which they were subordinate. The proceedings of the Trinity Guild are included in the Corporation Library, now removed to the Wisbech Museum to ensure more careful preservation. The Holy Trinity Guild Book is one of the most interesting of the manuscripts included in the library, and has been handed down through more than 500 years to the present day. It is inscribed on the side "Records of the Holy Trinity in Wysbech, 1379,—Annis Multis Intermissis—1547. Records of the Corporation, 1564-1566." The total sum of the receipts of the Guild for the year 1379, was £13 14s., including £4 6s. 8d., to

Don Adam Reynald, chaplain, "celebrant for the said guild," and certain sums spent on provisions and decorations of the Guild-hall, for the feast of the Principal Day, an annual festivity at which the old ordinances were read, and more elaborate services were performed at the church than was usual. The charges of this annual revel are noticeable in every account, and numerous entries show that the men seldom attended these gatherings without bringing their wives to share in the service or entertainment. In the ordinances of 1470, we read that—

From this tyme forward the Alderman and his Bretheren shall yerly have a morn-speche, on the Fryday next before Trinite Sunday, by VII. of Clocke on the fore none, in the Gylde Halle, when the Balyfe of lands shall yield his accounts. And also it is ordered that in every principale day after dyner and souper, the Deene shall proclame with an opyn voyce, that every man and woman shall pray devoutely for the soules of all the Brederen and systers of this Gylde, and for all Crysten Soules, and to kepe sylence while the Gylde Preste shall sey Grace and De Profundis, &c., for all Crysten Soules."

Among other ordinances, was one directing that the Stewards and server should see every brother and sister of the Guild "honestly served" in the hall on Trinity Sunday, and when the Aldermen and his brethren have dined, that the poor people then present should be seated at a table in the said hall, and served by the steward and server with such meat as shall be left by the said Aldermen and his brethren. The schoolmaster was ordered to have "but eight marks sterling to his wages." The attendance of the members of the Guild at church was the occasion of the preparation of "three torchettes of wax, to be borne afore the said Aldermen to and fro church, and to bring in the halle at the tyme of grace and prayers seying, and also to be borne before everye brodyr and sustyr of this Gylde to church at theyr ded day (funeral)." Those who did not attend church on Principal Day were fined eight pounds of wax, which probably represented one of the tapers or candles used at the services. In 1462, there is an order for letting their hall to the eight other guilds already referred to, which at that time existed in Wisbech, viz., the Guilds of St. George (probably a trading guild), Corpus Christi, the Cross, St. Lawrence, St. John the Baptist, St. Peter, St. Thomas, and the Holy Virgin Mary, but there is no other evidence than this of their existence. The entries in the Guild book are in Latin till 1470, when the first English entry occurs, though they are not wholly in English until 1513. In the beginning of the reign of Edward VI., commissioners were sent to

inquire into the possessions of the Guild, and we are told, that it was ascertained that the Guild had supported a Grammar School, that a priest or incumbent of a chantry was *in esse*, and certain piers, jetties, and banks had been also maintained, whereupon the inhabitants having obtained the good offices of Bishop Gooderick, His Majesty was prevailed upon in consideration of these requirements having been fulfilled, to restore the possessions of the Guild on payment of a certain sum, and to raise the town to the dignity of a Corporation. The last meeting of the Guild was held in 1557. Although the town of Wisbech in 1190 received grants of privileges and immunities from tolls from Richard I., which were confirmed at a later period by King John, its actual incorporation took place on June 1st, 1549, the charter of the town of Wisbech being granted in the third year of the reign of Edward VI. The original is preserved in the Corporation Library at the Wisbech Museum, and shows that the town paid to the King for this privilege £260 10s. 10d., being twenty years purchase of the clear annual value of £14 1s. 6½d., arising from possessions of the Guild re-granted to the inhabitants, which included six messuages, four gardens, and six hundred and sixteen acres of land, an estimate of their value that was afterwards said to have been highly favourable to the inhabitants.

The charter provides that the inhabitants maintaining a household, or as many as shall be willing, may on the 1st day of November, assemble in the Common Hall, and there nominate and choose "ten men of the better, more honest, and more discreet inhabitants there, maintaining a family." This was the origin of the Wisbech Corporation, and these ten men met once a month, dining in company at a tavern, and settling the public affairs, not always wisely, for it is told that in those days they sometimes exceeded their powers, by expending monies over which they had no right to exercise control. But there were no auditors to surcharge them for irregular payments, and they consequently escaped the consequence of their misdeeds. Nor did they always work harmoniously, for the *Records* tell us that the "most best, wysest, and substantiallest of ye said Towne were called with the ten men to appease such controversies, as doe aryse or grow betwene any of our neighbours, contrarye to ye dutie of christyans." In 1611, on the 28th of January, in the eighth year of the reign of James I., a renewal of Edward's charter was obtained, by which the "tenne mienne" chosen annually, were designated "Capital Burgesses," and were described as of "the better, more opulent, honest, and discreet



Burgesses." The day of election was altered from the 1st to the 2nd of November, but there was no recognition of a Town Bailiff to be chosen by the Capital Burgesses. The elective power was limited to freeholders of 40s. yearly value, being householders. The Capital Burgesses met in the schoolroom of the Grammar School, which was the ancient Town Hall, and their income was about £800 per annum, partly arising from a grant made by Trinity House in 1710, of one penny per ton, upon all goods expended or imported for the purpose of maintaining buoys and beacons, and keeping clear the channel of the river. But there was yet a third charter to follow, that of Charles II., dated 27th February, 1681, and in the twenty-first year of that monarch's reign. It recited the former charters of Edward and James, and confirmed and defined more precisely the privileges accorded by them. These three charters are still in good preservation, though somewhat broken from having been folded together for so many years. The head of Edward's charter is decorated with Tudor emblems, that of James is quite plain, but that of Charles has his portrait, and is elaborately embellished and decorated. The great seal is very much broken, on that of Edward, and almost gone from that of Charles. They have been deposited in a glass case, at the Museum, with a view to their preservation and, at the same time, to afford the inhabitants and visitors the opportunity of seeing these important documents.

Among the entries in the Corporation records of 1657, the election of the Right Hon. John Thurloe, Principal Secretary of State, as a Capital Burgess may be noted, and authority is given under Letters Patent granted "by his Highness Oliver, late Lord Protector of England, etc.," to sell or let lands belonging to the "Towne of Wisbeche." In January, 1678, the provision of cakes, wine, and ale, for the freeholders at the November elections, proved to be inconvenient, because retarding the election, producing quarrellings and offensive words, so that it was ordered that no provision be thereafter made, especially as the next election would fall on a Sunday! But many years after, provision was ordered to be made as formerly, at a cost not exceeding £8, and "to take care of an orderly and decent distribution of it." Evidently the disputes revived, for the Corporation again prohibited it, and promised and agreed that they would not, upon any account whatever, revive it, but would oppose it whenever moved.

The Trinity Guild is believed to have met in a primitive building, with thatched roof, supposed to have stood on the site

of the present Grammar School, but its locality is not known with certainty. The Capital Burgesses held their meetings in the schoolroom of the present Grammar School, which at that time had an open timbered roof, since removed to provide more dormitory accommodation. In 1810, the Capital Burgesses removed from the Grammar School, to a room under the same house as the old Custom House and the Butter Cross, where they were located for a period of twenty-five years. The increase of numbers conferred by the Municipal Act of 1835 upon that body (the civil power being also attached to the municipal), necessitated larger rooms for magisterial and municipal business. This led to their removal to the Exchange Hall, as the lower portion of the present Town Hall was then denominated. The building had been erected in 1811, on the site of the Nag's Head, which was acquired for a sum of £1,700. The upper rooms were for a time, used by a company of gentlemen as news and billiard rooms, after which the Town Council entered upon them. The lower portion was then adopted as a Corn Exchange, and a place for entertainments. These quarters were occupied for thirty-seven years, and in 1872, the Corporation effected an admirable improvement, when Mr. C. E. Mumford was Borough Surveyor, by raising the roof and rebuilding a considerable portion of the structure. The Council Chamber was thus made into a much more lofty and capacious hall. In this room, there are now placed portraits of Thomas Clarkson, the zealous anti-slavery advocate, by Lane; Dr. Jobson, the vicar of Wisbech, by Strutt; and of Ald. Richard Young, M.P., Sheriff of London and Middlesex, by H. F. Creighton, of Sheffield, presented to the town after Mr. Young's decease. There are also some smaller ones of former Mayors of the Borough.

The library in the muniment room was formerly in charge of a librarian, who was appointed at a nominal salary, the Rev. George Thompson being the last holder of that office. One result of the visit of the British Archæological Society, was that in consequence of the condition of some of the manuscripts and books, the Corporation ultimately handed its custody over to the directors of the Museum, with a nominal annual allowance. The names of the benefactors to the library are inscribed on vellum, and include Secretary Thurloe, Beaupré Bell, of Beaupré Hall; Sir Algernon Peyton, and others. To Mann Hutcheson, a solicitor of the town, and Town Bailiff in 1789, the borough is indebted for the rescue from a state of chaos and confusion of the records of pro-

ceedings of the Trinity Guild, the Ten Men and the Capital Burgesses, which he arranged in a convenient form for reference. Recently a manuscript volume was presented to the Museum, containing a translation of the charter of Wisbech, and some interesting antiquarian notes by this industrious Town Bailiff of a century ago, whose tombstone, partly in Latin, may be observed on the right hand side of the footpath in the Churchyard, by those who pass from the Crescent to the Church Terrace. Col. Watson also translated part of the records, and gave the substance of the remainder in a MS. volume, presented to the Corporation in 1822. An index made by the Rev. Jeremiah Jackson, M.A., vicar of Elm, and also presented to the Corporation, is included in the library. Some further particulars relating to this library will be found in the description of the Museum, in which building it is deposited.

In *Watson's History of Wisbech* it is recorded that in 1592 a portrait of Edward VI. was bought, an entry in the Corporation records appearing as follows:—"Memdum. I bought for the towne, in London, the picture of King Edward VI., K.E." which in 1827 was hanging up in the Town Hall. This portrait has within the last ten or fifteen years been observed in the Council Chamber, and was a small picture with a deep gold frame, and evidently an old painting. It has, however, disappeared, and there is no trace of what has become of it. This is to be regretted, as it was to this King the town owes its charter. There are two other Royal portraits which are no longer traceable, viz., those of William and Mary. Their existence is recorded in *Walker and Craddock's History of Wisbech* as follows:—"1695. It was agreed that the Town Bailiff doe pay forthwith the money due for King William's and Queen Mary's pictures, now in the Towne Hall.—Corporation Records, vol. 5." It would be interesting to know what has become of these portraits, which ought to adorn the walls of the Council Chamber.

Among other disabilities in Municipal matters, existing in those days, was the Tests and Corporation Acts, by which all persons were excluded from holding office in Corporations, unless they had received the sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England, within twelve months. This was a serious injustice and grievance to Nonconformists, who manifested their opposition to this intolerant measure at every possible opportunity. In 1824, Mr. Hill, representing the Nonconformists, put the question to a practical test, and was elected at the poll. The placard issued after this election has been preserved, and is worth repro-

ducing as an illustration of an election of seventy years ago, which excited considerable interest at the time:—

### LOST.

Last night between the Hours of Six and Twelve o'clock.  
The Credit and Honour of the Burgesses of Wisbech.

Supposed to be lost in some measure by carelessness and negligence, but more through the influence of Roast Beef and Strong Beer, supplied in such abundance at the Rose and Crown Inn.

### SEE AND BELIEVE!!!

Gentlemen, late Capital Burgesses, but displaced last night.  
Abraham Jobson, D.D.  
William Watson, Esq.  
Hugh Jackson, Esq.  
James Usill, Esq.  
Rev. J. Jackson.

All,—All, Honourable men of long-bred Honesty and Integrity; the former the greatest benefactor to Wisbech that the town has known for the last century.

The New Capital Burgesses.  
James Hill, Merchant.  
John Boulton, Merchant,  
J. R. Weatherhead, Apothecary.  
Joseph Johnson, Apothecary.  
John Whitsed, M.D.

All,—All, Men of yesterday, almost unknown to Wisbech; three of them from Peterborough where *they may be better known*.

Would you believe it, that Dr. Jobson, who so materially assisted in building your Boys' Charity School; who in conjunction with our late worthy Capital Burgess, John Edes, Esq., built your Girls' Charity School, and purchased land at their own cost to the amount of six hundred pounds and upwards to endow the said school, who within the last few weeks has presented five hundred pounds sterling to your Town for ever, the interest to be applied as the salary of a Master to a Sunday School, with many other virtuous and valuable donations. That he, with the other respectable gentlemen named on the same side, have been displaced from your Town Hall to make way for nobody knows whom? Oh that I should have such cause to blush for my fellow burgesses, and see the day that such acts as these, and such services as have been rendered to your Town generally by all the displaced gentlemen, should be thus forgotten when placed in the scale against the Roast Beef and Beer. Alas poor fallen Wisbech!

3rd November, 1824.

A BURGESS.

Mr. Hill subsequently refused to answer whether he had received the sacrament of the Church of England, and the Rev. Jeremiah Jackson, next on the poll entered a protest, and claimed the tenth seat in the Hall. This being the only legal procedure, Mr. Jackson was declared a Capital Burgess. The offensive Act was, however, repealed in 1827, though not until two instances, at least, had occurred of a similar character to that referred to.

In consequence of the abuses which had crept into the Corporations of the United Kingdom, a Commission was granted to investigate the conditions of the Corporations, and the manner of distribution of their funds. Wisbech, unlike many other Corporations, which strenuously opposed the inquiry, willingly gave an account of its funds and their disposal, the Town Bailiff afterwards reporting that he had reason to believe the explanations were considered creditable to the Capital Burgesses and satisfactory to the Committee. Wisbech lent its aid to the proposals of the Municipal Bill, which was formulated upon the basis of the Commissioners' report, and showed a larger-minded view of the matter than many, by expressing a strong opinion in favour of an open and honest system of municipal administration. The Bill, although in danger of mutilation by the Lords, ultimately passed, and on the 28th day of December, 1835, the old charter went out of operation, the town was divided into two wards, and the Town Bailiff and Ten Capital Burgesses gave place to the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors, similar in constitution to the Corporation of to-day. Some alterations were made, such as the removal of the administration of the charities, the Act also providing for a permanent local magistracy selected from the ranks of the Corporation and from the principal Burgesses, with the Mayor and Ex-Mayor for the time being, added to their number.

In connection with the insignia of the Corporation, an event which deserves a place in municipal records took place on the 9th November, 1883, when Mr. W. M. Rust was elected for the second time to the Mayoralty. Although the Mayors of Wisbech had been in the habit of assuming the scarlet robes of office, which had been presented by Mrs. Young, widow of Mr. Richard Young, M.P., the usual gold chain and badge, worn by provincial Mayors on state occasions, was not possessed by the municipality. Mr. Rust, during his first year of office, determined that this deficiency should be supplied. Applications were made to past Mayors, and to the surviving representatives of those who were deceased, inviting them to contribute a link as a memorial of their year of office. A very satisfactory response was received, and twenty sets of links were provided. The treasurer, Mr. Algernon Peckover, undertook to provide the badge, and the Town Clerk, with the members of the family of the late Town Clerk, Mr. Edward Jackson, made themselves responsible for a very fine central link. With the subscriptions of past Mayors and their representatives, a splendid chain was provided. It is of

15 carat Hall marked gold, each of the twenty links bearing the name of a Mayor of Wisbech from 1835, in the following order:—

## MAYORS.

Henry Leach, 1835, 1839, 1847.	Wm. Hutchinson, 1863.
J. Weatherhead, 1836.	Geo. Dawbarn, 1864.
Thos. Dawbarn, 1837.	Fredc. Ford, 1865, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1875.
James Usill, 1842.	Wm. Groom, 1866
C. Metcalfe, Junr., 1843.	Wm. Gay, 1867.
J. Whitsed, M.D., 1844, 1850.	J. M. Mason, 1874.
Wm. Stevens, 1845, 1846, 1848.	Chas. Gane, 1876, 1877.
H. M. Usill, 1853.	J. W. Stanley, 1878, 1879.
R. Wherry, 1854, 1868, 1869, 1870.	T. Pattrick, 1880, 1881.
Richard Young, 1858, 1859, 1860, 1861, 1862.	W. M. Rust, 1882, 1883.

The following Mayors have since added links to the chain:—

Fredk. Peatling, 1884, 1885.	Henry Farrow, 1890, 1891.
John T. Hiscox, 1886, 1887.	George Carrick, 1892.
John Goward, 1888, 1889.	Alfred W. May, 1893 1894.

The badge is almost an exact reproduction in gold of the common seal of the borough, with two figures of SS. Peter and Paul, and an inscription "Insigne Municipale Wisbechiense." On the reverse side are the following names:—

## TREASURERS.

William Peckover, 1836.	Algernon Peckover, 1877.
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The centre link has on the obverse an enamel picture of an old English warship, denoting the fact of Wisbech being a seaport, and on the reverse the following names:—

## TOWN CLERKS.

Edward Jackson, 1836.	Francis Jackson, 1847.
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The donors of the links were as follows:—Mr. Matthew Leach, Sheffield; Mr. J. E. Weatherhead, Leicester; Mr. G. Dawbarn, two links representing Mr. T. Dawbarn and Mr. G. Dawbarn; Rev. James H. Usill, Eastbourne, representing Mr. James Usill and Mr. H. M. Usill; Mr. F. M. Metcalfe, Inglethorpe Hall, and the Rev. G. Metcalfe, rector of Christchurch, Upwell; Miss Whitsed, Peterborough; Mrs. Stevens; Mrs. Wherry; Mrs. Young; Mrs. Gay; Mr. W. Hutchinson; Ald. Ford; Ald. Groom; Councillor Gane; Ald. Mason; Ald. Stanley; Mr. T. M. Pattrick; Mr. W. M. Rust; the centre link, the Town Clerk, Mr. Frank Jackson, and the family of the late Town Clerk, Mr. E. Jackson; and the medallion by the Treasurer, Mr. Algernon Peckover.

Mr. Robert Bennett, the Deputy Town Clerk, who had acted as Secretary and Treasurer to the Committee, presented the Past Mayors' Chain to the Mayor (Mr. W. M. Rust), as the property of the Corporation, and to be held by the Mayor for the time being. Mr. Robert Dawbarn, J.P., who was Town Bailiff in 1831, in the reign of William IV., and the only survivor of the Town Bailiffs, was present, and remarked that he remembered when the population of the town was only 5,000, whilst the improvements that had been made were of a very marked character. The Mayor having accepted the chain and thanked the donors, the business of the election of Mayor was proceeded with, the recipient of the chain being again chosen to serve the office.

The following reference to the insignia of the Corporation, from particulars supplied by Mr. Francis Jackson, Town Clerk of Wisbech, appears in *The Corporation Plate and Insignia of the Cities and Corporate Towns of England and Wales*, by Llewellyn Jewitt and W. H. St. John Hope.\*

The insignia of the Corporation is confined to a Mayor's chain, badge of office, and the town seal; and the plate to a silver tankard. The chain and badge which are of gold, were purchased from the subscriptions of past and present Mayors, Town Clerks, or Treasurers, or their representatives, in 1883, and were manufactured by Messrs. Blanckensee and Son, of Birmingham. The chain is composed of a central and twenty other links of oblong form, with semi-circular ends, connected together by triplets of circular links, and each bearing a shield surmounted by a mural crown. Each of these shields bear the cognizance of the town, two keys in saltire, and the name and date of office of some Mayor, the whole forming in chronological sequence a record, with five exceptions, of the successive Mayors, from the first who held that office after the abolition of the Town Bailiffs by the Municipal Reform Act of 1835, down to the present day. The central link, which is of somewhat larger size, bears a representation in enamel of an old English warship, intended to denote the fact of Wisbech being a seaport; on the back are the names of its donors—"Edward Jackson, 1836; Francis Jackson, 1847." The badge, which is circular and depends from the central link, bears in relief two keys in saltire, surrounded by the words "Insigne Municipale Wisbechiense," the whole encircled by an elaborate wreath of oak leaves and acorns. On the back are the names of its donors: Treasurers: "William Peckover, 1836; Algernon Peckover, 1877."

The tankard which is 6½ inches in height is of silver and very massive. It is of the ordinary "drum" form, with hinged cover and

\* We are indebted to Messrs. Bemrose and Sons, Limited, London, the publishers, for permission to publish this interesting account of the Corporation insignia.

handle. In front, on an oval shield, surrounded with foliated mantling are engraved the arms of the Town, and two keys in saltire. Under the shield is the date 1701, and beneath it, the inscription "Donum Ricardi Loake." There are four hall marks (1) the Makers, D.I. with cherub head and wings above, and three pellets below all in a shaped shield; (2) Britannia; (3) lion's head erased; (4) small court hand (ff) the London date letter for 1701-2.

The seal, of silver, is circular, 1½ inch in diameter, and bears what has not been inaptly described as a portico with two gables, supported by three baluster pillars with ball terminations, and containing figures of SS. Peter and Paul. The spandrels are filled in with scroll work, and round the whole is the legend \* Sigillum \* Commune \* Inhabitancium \* Ville \* de \* Wisbiche.\*

Three other small seals are also in use. The first is circular with two keys in saltire, and the date 1740. The other two are respectively circular and oval and also bear the crossed keys, which on the oval seal are placed on a shield.

The robes of the Mayor are scarlet trimmed with fur. They were the gift of the widow of Ald. Richard Young, five times Mayor of the Borough, and afterwards M.P. for Cambridgeshire, as well as Sheriff of London and Middlesex.

With regard to the tankard, it may be remarked that Richd. Loake, the donor of the silver tankard, bequeathed £100 in 1701, to be applied in clothing five poor widows or housekeepers, and this charity is still distributed. For nearly 400 years, to the present day, this tankard has been filled with "Bishop" on the Mayor's day, the ninth of November, from which the members drink success to the Mayoralty. There have been however, some exceptions, when Mayors, of temperance principles, have regarded this custom as among those which are "more honoured in the breach than in their observance." One historian\* gives Simon Loake the credit of having given this tankard, but as that citizen was elected a Capital Burgess in 1667—thirty-four years previous to the date on this cup, it is probable that his son or nephew, Richard, was the donor, as the inscription indicates.

The incorporation of the Borough seems to have stimulated the adoption of progressive measures, which have placed Wisbech in a position that will compare favourably with most towns of its size, and furnish indisputable evidence of the enterprise and energy of its municipality. Many of the advantages enjoyed by the inhabitants, at the present day, have been obtained with the aid of, if not always on the initiative of the Corporate body. It has sometimes happened that individual members, with keener foresight and greater enterprise than their coadjutors, have initiated

\* *Walker and Craddock's History of Wisbech.*



schemes of utility, and by untiring advocacy, secured the approval of the local authority for such projects as they have thought calculated to advance local interests. In other instances, an appeal to the zeal and energy of the inhabitants themselves, has resulted in the advancement of their ideas. When the Nene Valley works were in progress, financial considerations were a serious hindrance to undertaking new developments, and the Corporation was compelled to husband its resources, and administer its revenue with great prudence and caution. In the pages which follow, many of the difficulties through which the Corporation piloted the town will be described, imperfectly and inadequately we fear, in the space at command, but nevertheless conveying a general idea of the responsibilities which have devolved during the last half century upon the municipality.

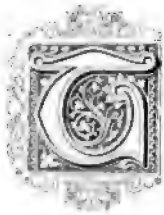
Among the advantages conferred upon the town during the period of municipal administration referred to, not the least important are those which have contributed to the health of the population, and so improved its sanitary condition that the death rate, in its relative smallness, is comparable with almost any other town in the Kingdom. The Corporation has acted wisely in carrying out a satisfactory system of drainage, and the town is indebted for this to the persistent advocacy of Mr. George Dawbarn, and the determination which he showed in maintaining its importance in the face of strenuous opposition. To Mr. Dawbarn also, the acquisition of an abundant and pure supply of water was due, he having originated with some others, the Water Company, which has proved to be a successful and remunerative investment, as well as an inestimable benefit to the district. The Lighting Company was another of Mr. Dawbarn's successful ventures at an earlier period of the history of the town. The acquisition by the municipality of a spacious ornamental Park, in the centre of the town, available for recreative purposes, has attracted around it a residential suburb, which was originally laid out with wide and pleasant roads, by Mr. Fredk. C. Southwell, formerly of Selborne House, and Mr. C. E. Mumford, who was Borough Surveyor at that time. The large sums of money perforce devoted to maintaining the trade of the port, and to safeguarding the banks of the river, have been a constant source of anxiety to a succession of active and useful Mayors, who leave behind them a record of honourable services given to the Borough during their period of office in the chair. Whilst the expenditure on the river may not have been directly remunerative, the broad quays and well-stocked timber yards testify to their indirect value

in promoting the commercial interests of the port, despite growing competition at home and abroad and the long continued period of agricultural depression. Some of these expensive works have necessitated considerable sacrifices on the part of the inhabitants, who whilst occasionally demurring to items of excessive costliness have, nevertheless, courageously faced difficulties of no ordinary kind. When it is remembered that less than fifty years ago Wisbech was nearly closed as a port, because of the disastrous results of the Nene Valley river works, involving the town in a heavy debt, as well as decreasing its shipping trade for the time; also that water famines were periodically experienced, and that lack of efficient drainage brought cholera visitations or epidemics, swelling the death-rate to an abnormal point, may we not endorse, in relation to the progress of Wisbech, the words of Sydney Smith—

The good of ancient times, let others state,  
We think t'was lucky we were born so late.

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## CHAPTER VII.

NENE VALLEY SCHEMES AND RIVER WORKS. THE STONE  
AND IRON BRIDGES AT WISBECH.

THE river Nene has undoubtedly brought a large trade to the town and employed a considerable amount of labour, but the improvements which have been effected during the present century, and the maintenance of its banks and wharves, have necessitated the expenditure of immense sums of money by the inhabitants of the town. If it were possible to bring together in one amount those liabilities—not only arising from the Nene Valley Works, but from the schemes of improvement undertaken by the Wisbech Harbour and riparian authorities for the maintenance of the channel and banks—it would certainly show a startling total. The cost of the Nene Valley Works, as the older inhabitants know too well, imposed an enormous burden upon the town, and despite the strenuous and persistent opposition of the municipality, Wisbech was compelled, sorely against its will, to contribute to an enterprise which, at one time, threatened dire disaster to the trade of the port.

“In olden times,” says Badeslade, “while the Ouse and the Nene discharged themselves at Wisbech, ships of great burthen resorted to that port.” But after those rivers had deserted their ancient outlet, the town soon ceased to be accessible to larger vessels.” The bed or channel below the town being forsaken by the said rivers or, at most, occupied only by an inconsiderable branch of the Nene, which must have been insufficient to scour it

to its former depth, would gradually be filled up in time with silt and sand. Dugdale confirms this by relating that in deepening the river in 1635, about 300 years after the desertion of the Ouse, the workmen at eight feet below the then bottom, came to another bottom which was stony, and there, at several distances, found seven boats that had lain there, overwhelmed with sand for many ages. Atkins in 1608 speaks of the Wisbech channel as "anciently an arm of the sea." The decay of the channel however, became so great that the outfall was "sufficiently shallow to admit of people going over on foot, bare-legged under the knees."\* Mr. Wells, writing on the state of the river in 1804, has the following curious statement:—

The state of the Nene had long been a subject of general complaint; so much so, that a respectable Alderman of Lynn facetiously observed that he regularly attended the river Nene meetings, until he saw, on his way thither, persons making hay in the bed of the river, after which he thought such attendance perfectly unnecessary!†

Obviously this was a playful exaggeration, but it probably indicated a very defective condition of the channel. It is unnecessary to refer to the making of Kinderley's Cut, the Nene Outfall Cut‡ (from Kinderley's Cut to Crab Hole), or to Woodhouse Marsh Cut—the last-named known by the name of Paupers' Cut, because agricultural distress having thrown large numbers of able-bodied paupers on the poor rate, they were employed on this work. These are described in a former history. The effect of the Nene Outfall Works upon the river at Wisbech was immediate and beneficial. The bed was lowered from ten feet to twelve feet by scour alone, thus effecting an improvement without the extra cost that Rennie and Telford had thought might be necessary.‡

In 1824, the first cargo of foreign timber arrived in the port of Wisbech, brought by an English barque. At that time there was no piling on the river banks, and in some of the older engravings, notably a view of Wisbech in 1756, the gradually sloping banks of the river are shown. The mails from Guyhirn

\* *History of Lynn*, by William Richards, M.A., 1812.

† *Wells' History of Bedford Level*, p. 720.

‡ Towards the cost of the Nene Outfall Works, Wisbech paid £30,000, and the Hundred of Wisbech £15,000 more. *The Nene in Danger*, 1862. Mr. Smiles in his *Lives of the Engineers*, says that Kinderley thoroughly understood the grand, though simple principle of confining the river in a narrow channel, in order to secure depth by force and weight of current.

‡ *Geology of the Fenland*, by Sydney B. J. Skertchley, F.G.S., 1877.

and the upper reaches were brought by a slow packet, which threaded its way from Peterborough to Wisbech, charging a fare of half-a-crown to passengers. Fifteen to twenty years later, the completion of the Nene Outfall Works from the Foul Anchor to the Lighthouses was beginning to favourably affect the trade of the port, and Dr. Whitsed, who was Mayor in 1845, when laying the foundation stone of the new Crane and Warehouses, referred to the immense increase which had taken place in their trade and commerce, owing in part to the completion of those works. In fact, two years afterwards, the trade was in the zenith of its prosperity, the exports and imports reaching the highest point on record—167,443 tons.\* During the year 1847, on the 28th of May, wheat was 102s. 6d. per quarter, but speculators experienced a remarkable drop, for within sixteen weeks, the price suddenly fell to 49s. 6d., a difference of no less than 53s. per quarter. "Never in our own recollection" says an agricultural writer in the *Advertiser*, "have we witnessed such a complete prostration of the corn trade, and though it is said we had a famine to deal with,† the dearth of food really existed nowhere but in the brains of speculators,‡ who will be the greater sufferers by these ruinous prices." The opening of the railways, however, seriously affected the coasting trade of the port, and within seven years its exports and imports had diminished by one half, to 88,082 tons. An important step was taken on August 20th, 1847, when an influential meeting was held at Whittlesey, to consider the improvement of the Nene, above and below Wisbech, with a view to facilitating drainage and the navigation of vessels to Peterborough. Mr. J. W. Childers presided, and a committee was formed, which included the Mayor of Wisbech (Alderman Stevens), Mr. Tycho Wing,‡ Mr. Thomas Dawbarn, Mr. Robert Dawbarn and others, to further the proposals made. During the preceding year various schemes had been afloat for

\* A keen rivalry in the corn carrying trade had existed for some years between Wisbech and Goole, the grain for London and elsewhere being almost all shipped in round sterned one-mast sloops of fifty to ninety tons, known as "billy-boys." At the time referred to, Wisbech succeeded in beating Goole in her export grain tonnage, and achieved for herself the reputation of the most important corn shipping port of the United Kingdom in the home trade, ten thousand quarters of wheat being on one occasion shipped in eight days.

† The Irish famine caused by the failure of the potato crop in 1846.

‡ It caused suffering in Ireland, but the supply of corn was much overdone.

‡ The Duke of Bedford's agent at Thorney, and the chief promoter of the Nene Outfall Scheme of 1827. The lower part of the Nene Outfall Cut is called Tycho Wing's channel,

providing docks at Wisbech. Mr. George Hudson, mentioned in a previous chapter as the "Railway King," had visited the town to confer with the Corporation as to a dock proposed to be made on the north side of the Nene at a cost of £30,000. In the following March, 1847, during Mr. William Stevens' second Mayoral year, the Eastern Counties Railway Bill, for making a railway to Spalding and docks at Wisbech was under consideration, as well as a projected cut on the north side, with the conversion of the river in the town into a locked harbour, known as the "Back Cut Scheme." The Admiralty sent down engineers to investigate these proposals and to obtain evidence, the late Mr. Gardiner being employed for days together taking an official shorthand note of the protracted proceedings. The scheme was, however, abandoned in Parliament and came to nothing. It was a curious coincidence, that while these negotiations were in progress, some forty feet of the river wall on the South Brink fell, owing to its decayed condition. In February, 1849, the Marquis of Northampton presided over a meeting of the Nene Valley Drainage Commissioners held at Peterborough, when a committee was appointed to improve the drainage of the lower uplands, those on the margins of the river above Peterborough, with power to levy proportional rates for the purpose. Besides the Duke of Bedford, the chairman, Earl Spencer, Earl of Aboyne, Lord Lilford, Hon. G. W. Fitzwilliam, M.P., the Bishop of Peterborough, the Dean, Mr. Tycho Wing, the Mayor (Alderman Stevens), and the Town Clerk of Wisbech attended this meeting, and the committee included the names of the Mayor, Mr. Algernon Peckover, Mr. Charles Metcalfe, Mr. H. Morton, Mr. Robert Ward and others, a subscription of 1s. 6d. per acre being invited from the owners of lands liable to be flooded. This was the beginning of the Nene Valley Scheme, which afterwards so seriously affected the finances of Wisbech. The committee met at Lord Spencer's house in London in May, and appointed Mr. Rendel, C.E., its engineer, but no further steps were taken until the old Cross Keys or Sutton Bridge had been replaced by a new one. This bridge is situated in the lower port of Wisbech.

It may be explained that the estuary of the Nene was originally known as the Cross Keys Wash, which divided Norfolk from Lincolnshire.\* The only passage between the two Counties

\* The Wash itself is not an estuary but a true bay, an indentation of the land and beach of the coast from the sea side. The width of the mouth of the Wash from Hunstanton Light to Gibraltar Point is exactly twelve miles; the length from the centre of a line joining the above points to Fleet Haven is

was by fording across the sands (which were left nearly dry at low water), from the Cross Keys House in Marshland, to the Cross Keys House at Sutton Wash, now known as Sutton Bridge, three miles east of Long Sutton. This passage was dangerous without a guide, as lives were sometimes lost.\* A more modern way of crossing was that by means of a pillion, the guide riding on horseback in the ordinary way, and the passenger, whether man or woman, mounting on the pillion behind him. For a horse and trap, the guide would ride on his horse in front of the vehicle, and, to avoid holes, the passage across was sometimes circuitous. In the case of droves of bullocks, of which there were many from Scotland and Lincolnshire, he would ride in front, the men in charge on horses driving them after him. One woman was drowned on a stormy day. The guide was partially deaf, and a strong wind was blowing. The woman mounted on the pillion behind, but fell off without his hearing it, and he only discovered that she was missing on reaching the other side, the ford at this point being about a mile wide, at low water. When the water was too high for fording, the crossing was effected by foot passengers in boats, whilst vehicles and cattle would have to wait until low water. A time table was usually kept on both sides to indicate the times of crossing.

In 1826, an Act of Parliament was obtained for the erection of the first bridge across the Nene Outfall Cut. It was a massive structure, built of British oak, with hoisting leaves, and a span of fifty-two feet. Extending from it was a high embanked road, across the Wash to the Norfolk side. This was begun in

14·8 miles; the greatest length from Hunstanton Light to Fosdyke Bridge is 23 miles; the greatest breadth from near South Wootton to the Witham Outfall is 18 miles, and the area is 250 square miles, measured within the line drawn from Hunstanton Lighthouse to Gibraltar Point. The configuration of the Wash is peculiar. Roughly speaking, it is a shallow bay with an average depth of say five fathoms, but having a deep hollow (Lynn Well) in the centre, ranging from fifteen to twenty-six fathoms. If it were hollowed out of hard rock it would be called a "lake basin," but it is scooped out of clay, and is probably only a basin in the boulder clay of East Anglia. The tidal currents screw round and round, forming a slow whirlpool, whose obvious effect is like a carpenter's centre-bit to bore a hole. *Geology of the Fenland*, by Sydney J. B. Skertchley, 1877.

\* "Here," says Parkin, "is a guide always attending, to conduct passengers over, bearing a wand or rod in his hand, probably in imitation of Moses, who had a rod when he conducted the Israelites through the Red Sea." A guide certainly does attend, and it seems he bears a wand; but that he does so in imitation of Moses was, perhaps, never supposed by anyone before Mr. Parkin. These guides very probably used a wand, or long rod, for the purpose of sounding the depth of the water, or to discover any dangerous holes in the bottom."—*Richards' History of Lynn*, vol. I., p 114.

1827, and the cost provided by the tolls charged on the bridge. At the same time, and under the powers of the same Act,\* 1,300 acres were reclaimed from the sea,† and afterwards called "Wingland," in honour of Mr. Tycho Wing. The embankment on the Wingland or Marshland side is about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles long, and its construction occupied 900 men and 260 horses for about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years, an opening being left about the middle, so that the tides might flow through, and warp or raise the lower parts of the old channels and creeks. In so doing it deposited nineteen feet of warp in eleven months—an extraordinary quantity in so short a time—against the dam made near the Foul Anchor when Kinderley's Cut was turned into the channel.

The bridge was actually built before the waters were diverted into the new channel, and the effect of letting the water into the

\* The Nene Outfall Act contemplated the improvement of the outfall of the Nene waters, the draining of the North Level, South Holland, Wisbech Hundred, and adjoining districts, and the reclamation from the sea of several thousand acres of land, by the diverting of the course of the waters now flowing over the loose and shifting sands, through the estuary of Sutton Wash to the sea, into a new confined channel of about seven miles in length, from Kinderley's Cut to Ciah Hole.—*Watson's History of Wisbech*.

† The accretion of land has been going on in the Wash from the earliest times. Along the base of the Wash it is nearly six times as fast as on the East Holland coast, and more than seventeen times as rapid as on the Norfolk coast. The rate along the East Holland coast is nearly three times as great as along the Norfolk coast. During the past 1,700 years, 64,000 acres have been enclosed. In 1839, Sir John Rennie proposed a grand scheme for enclosing and reclaiming 150,000 acres of land, and training the river to a common outfall in Lynn Well. Three Acts of Parliament were obtained in the years 1846, 1849, and 1851, to carry out the scheme in a modified manner, but the works were never executed. This quantity of sand is sure to become dry sooner or later. If the rate for the last 1,700 years be taken as a basis of calculation, it would take about 4,600 years to silt up naturally, but as we may be sure embankment will go on as green marsh is formed, the rate for the two last centuries may be safely accepted as nearer the mark. At this rate it would take about 1,000 years to silt up. By enclosing this area at once and warping the land, it would be entirely converted into good land in, say 50 years. But long before that time much would have become grassed over, and I have no hesitation in saying, that had Rennie's scheme been carried out at the time the Acts were obtained and at the estimated cost, a dividend would have been paid ere this, and it would go on steadily increasing for many years. The public advantages of this work would be very great, the rivers united in the centre of the Wash, would be able to maintain their channels tolerably free from deposit; the food produce of so large an area would be of great value, and if a belt of woodland was formed round the new coast, the rainfall of the Fens would lose much of its present spasmodic character, and be more evenly distributed through the year. The engineering difficulties of the scheme, though great, are by no means insurmountable, and as the silt land is some of the richest in the Kingdom, one cannot but regret that the matter fell through for want of funds and the hearty co-operation of the Fenlanders. *Geology of the Fenland*, by Sydney B. J. Skeritchley, F.G.S., 1877.



new cut was prodigious, causing the Bridge Company, to whom it belonged, extreme anxiety, as the structure seemed in danger of being washed down. Immense quantities of stone were thrown in, which at the ebbing and flowing of the tide scooped out holes twenty-eight feet to thirty feet deep, at low water. These holes created a series of eddies on the flowing of the tide, which made vessels almost unmanageable, and serious accidents sometimes occurred, resulting in the damaging of both vessels and bridge. The extraordinary scour rendered it necessary to protect the new channel with stones, amounting in quantity to 100,000 tons, at an expense of £32,000. In consequence of the obstruction caused by this bridge to the channel of the river, a new one was built under powers conferred by the Nene Improvement Act of 1848. It was of iron, the contract being taken by Messrs. Grissel for £18,000, in the early part of 1850. The following inscription on the bridge records the circumstances of its erection :—

Constructed A.D. 1850, under the superintendence of the Nene Outfall Commissioners, with the special encouragement and support of Francis, seventh Duke of Bedford, K.G. The principal contributors were the parties interested in the navigation of the river and in the North Level Drainage. Constructed 1850, Robert Stephenson, Engineer. H. and M. D. Grissel, Regent's Canal Ironworks, London, Contractors.

The opening took place on September 24th, 1850, and twelve years later, in September, 1862, it was sold by the Cross Keys' Bridge Company to the Peterborough, Wisbech, and Sutton Bridge Railway, for £12,500 in cash, and a further sum in railway shares. The line having since passed into the hands of the Eastern and Midlands Company, and been subsequently sold to the Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway Company, the development of the traffic under the last named management has necessitated the erection of a new bridge, to which we may refer at a later period of this history.

The Nene Outfall Works, besides greatly improving navigation,\* added a large tract of land recovered from the sea as the reward of its enterprising promoters, and encouraged further attempts in a like direction. In 1836, Sir John Rennie, reporting on the Nene, recommended that the stone bridge at Wisbech should be removed, together with the adjoining houses on the north and south sides of the river, below the bridge, in order to double the sectional area at high and low water. He advocated a

\* Spring tides which rose only four feet at Wisbech before the Outfall Works were executed, in 1875 rose fifteen feet,

wet dock, and a lock above Bevis Hall, to enable vessels drawing seven feet to reach Peterborough. In 1840, he further reported upon a north or "back cut" as recommended by Mr. Rennie in 1814, making the old channel a dock, which he described as preferable, both for drainage and navigation, to improving the crooked and contracted channel through the town. In 1848, Mr. Robert Stephenson also suggested a back cut from Messrs. Phillips' (now Messrs. Elgood's) brewery to the Horse Shoe Corner, about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles long. Upon the fresh water question in relation to the Thorney Lordship, he writes:—

At first sight it might appear reasonable to infer that enlarging and shortening the channel would give the sea water freer access to the higher portions of the river, and would consequently remove the boundary between the fresh and salt water to some higher point. A careful study has led me to draw the opposite conclusion, and to believe that the increased reservoir would be supplied from inland, and that the limit between the two kinds of water would be lower down the stream rather than higher up.

But this opinion was modified by Mr. Stephenson in 1858, when again reporting upon the Nene he writes:—

Whilst believing the above theory to be maintainable, Mr. Rendel's works in the Nene convinced me, that practically the effect of works which afford freer access to the river is the admission of a larger quantity of salt water. As a rule the fresh water column in a river in dry weather is a limited and diminishing quantity, whilst the salt water is a quantity which will vary in proportion to the space into which it is admitted. This modification has been forced upon me by Mr. Rendel's work, and by two years' experience of dry seasons.

In 1851, the Nene Valley Commissioners intimated to the Corporation of Wisbech their intention to apply to Parliament for powers to carry out Mr. Rendel's scheme, the object of which was to accelerate the passage of water, both for drainage and navigation purposes, and with these ends in view, he proposed that the river banks should be piled and stoned at Wisbech, diedged to a uniform depth, both through the town and towards Peterborough, the worst bends removed, shoals taken away, and the bridge at Wisbech adjusted to the demands of a free current. He contemplated in his scheme the removal of the stone bridge at Wisbech, the destruction of the Butter Cross, and the undertaking of extensive wharfage and river works at a cost of £150,000, of which Wisbech was to contribute £40,000, and the proceeds of a halfpenny tonnage due levied on the shipping, estimated to produce annually £177, or, if capitalized

at twenty years' purchase, £3,540. The Corporation was naturally staggered by such sweeping proposals, and resolved to oppose a scheme that would not only heavily tax the ratepayers but require eight years to complete the works, during which time the trade of the port might be seriously imperilled. More than that, it was feared that though the Bill proposed to embrace navigation as well as drainage, the interests of the latter would always have the precedence, and that whenever the town and country came into collision on any question affecting both, the town would be sacrificed. A petition against the Bill was signed by the inhabitants, and Mr. George Hurwood, C.E., was sent down to hold an Admiralty enquiry as to Mr. Rendel's scheme. The Corporation at first showed their strong antagonism to the Bill, but influenced by representations made by the promoters, and trusting too implicitly that the clauses of the Act and the ability of Mr. Robert Stephenson, their engineer, would enable them to reap some benefit, they ultimately withdrew their opposition and the Act passed. The following is a summary of this Act of 1852:—

The Act incorporated certain Commissioners by the name of the "Nene Valley Drainage and Navigation Improvement Commissioners," with power to execute works for improving the Nene between the county boundary just below or seaward of Wisbech, and Kislingbury in Northampton. The work was divided into three districts, the third district being between the county boundary and Peterborough. The main objects of the scheme were the improvement of the river, and particularly through the town of Wisbech, where the channel was tortuous and contracted, the construction of new bridges in Wisbech and at the Dog-in-a-Doublet, the embankment of the Wash lands lying between Guyhirn and Peterborough called "Morton's Leam Wash," containing about 3,500 acres. The works in the lower division of the third district were to be completed by the 2nd of May, 1857, at an estimated cost of £150,000, to be contributed by the Corporation of Wisbech, owners of Wash lands, and lands supposed to derive benefit, including the Meadow lands at Peterborough. The Commissioners took upon themselves the maintenance of the river banks between Wisbech and Guyhirn, the acre taxes or annual contributions being payable to them, a navigation toll imposed between Wisbech and Peterborough, and a traffic toll at the Dog-in-a-Doublet bridge.

Mr. Henry Morton and Mr. William Stevens of Wisbech, were enrolled among the thirty-eight commissioners appointed by the Act, and four other gentlemen were chosen annually to represent Wisbech interests. It was soon found, however, after the Act was passed, that the Wisbech commissioners were powerless amongst seventy or more, to which the number had been subsequently increased. The landed and drainage representatives,

headed by the Duke of Bedford, whose supply of fresh water to the Thorney estate was affected, represented formidable interests, and although the Corporation appointed a committee to carefully watch its own interests, their representatives on the commission often found it difficult to materially influence any movement of the general body, or to check what they considered to be needless expenditure. The Corporation had themselves already incurred considerable expense in Parliamentary contests, during the seven years ending in 1852, as will be seen by the following amounts expended:—1846, £601; 1847, £1773; 1848, £545; 1849, £665; 1850, £447; 1852, £583; hence they naturally shrank from such costly undertakings as were contemplated in this Act.

But misfortunes seldom come singly, and in November, 1852, a few days after Mr. James Edward Fraser, solicitor, now of Lowestoft (of the firm of Fraser and Wright, Wisbech), had been elected to the Mayoralty, a further collapse of the river wall took place, which caused the greatest anxiety to the authorities. Heavy rains had fallen during the preceding week, and the “freshes” from the uplands coming down with great force through the narrow channel and round the sharp curve below the stone bridge occasioned a tremendous scour. Suddenly and without warning, sixty feet of the river wall, opposite the Exchange or Town Hall, gave way, as well as part of the roadway on the Nene Quay at the back of the Rose and Crown Hotel. The back premises of the King’s Head Inn, on the opposite side of the river, near the throttle—made of piles and stones, in order to reduce the river, which had been dredged, to its original size—were undermined, and the sinking of the foundations of the building was apprehended. Mr. William Adams, the Borough Surveyor, at once took action, and two hundred tons of chalk were thrown in at the foundations of the Stone Bridge. A number of men were at work on the Sunday filling up the gaping cavities which continued to appear. A small building at the rear of the King’s Head Inn fell bodily into the river, and great anxiety was felt as to other property. The Town Council was hastily summoned, and the Town Clerk (Mr. Francis Jackson) was despatched to interview Mr. Borthwick, C.E., who came from London the following morning, and confirmed the steps already taken. The rain having ceased, the freshes lessened in volume, and the tension was relieved. It was, however, a curious coincidence, that at this time the first annual payment of one third of £40,000 under the Nene Valley Act became due, which helped to further depress the ratepayers.

The actual commencement of the works was not made until January, 1854, the sanction of the Admiralty having been given on the 21st of December, 1853. A tender in the meantime had been accepted from Mr. Leather, of Leeds, for works between Wisbech and Peterborough, the amount of which was £124,800, the portion from the County boundary to Bevis Hall being £66,000, the whole to be completed in four years.

But before long, the details of the scheme and the estimates on which the Commissioners proceeded, were alleged to be defective, and financial difficulties were apprehended. With the reluctant consent of Wisbech, a fresh application was made to Parliament in 1854, for £55,000 to carry out unfinished works, together with a further sum of £25,000 for contingent works, and it was left with Sir John Pakington to decide by whom and in what proportions those additional sums should be paid. Sir John Pakington, Bart.,\* held an inquiry at Wisbech to apportion £80,000 among the contributors, under the Nene Valley Act, and his award, made in the following year, added to the depression caused by the costly nature of the works. Only a few days previously, the second instalment of £10,000, part of the £40,000 to be contributed by the Corporation, had become due, and had been met by the Mayor, members of the Corporation and other gentlemen personally advancing the amount in sums varying from £250 to £1000. Consequently, when it became known that Sir John Pakington had decided that Wisbech must contribute a further £12,000, and beyond that sum £4,670, contingent upon the Admiralty still enforcing an opening bridge, as well as a further £10,000 for the lower division works, altogether nearly £27,000, the prospect was disheartening indeed. An attempt had been previously made to induce the Admiralty to allow a fixed instead of an opening bridge, at Wisbech, and to emphasize the arguments used, the traffic for one week over the stone bridge was enumerated, 83,115 passengers, horses, carriages, and cattle crossing in the seven days. But Peterborough cherished the hope that the channel above Wisbech would be so much deepened that vessels would pass that town and discharge their cargoes on the wharves of the Cathedral city. To satisfy their expectations, the Admiralty declined to allow a fixed bridge, which would have been far less costly to the town.

Meanwhile the works were making slow progress. The first permanent pile had been driven into the Eastfield bank, opposite the "Royal Sailor" Inn, on the Nene Parade, and piling

\* Afterwards raised to the peerage, as Lord Hampton.

machines blocked the road along the Nene Quay. A dredging machine was throwing up material to fill the space between the old road and the new piling, whilst a temporary wooden bridge, opposite the White Hart Hotel, was erected and completed in November, 1854, preparatory to the removal of the stone bridge. The Corporation accepted the offer of the Nene Valley Commissioners for the purchase of the Butter Cross at £3,500, and the old houses on Cornhill, where the Post Office had been located, were sold. A special jury sitting at the Rose and Crown Hotel, assessed the value of Mr. John Lawson's granary and offices (opposite the Spread Eagle) at £2,200, the sum claimed being £4,500. Early in 1855, the Corporation found it necessary to apply to Parliament for powers to meet the heavy demands caused by the Nene Valley Works, and the opposition offered to it was met in committee by an arrangement that the rate was not to exceed 10d. in the £, the Bill, which received the Royal Assent on July 23rd, 1855, having cost £1,051 to obtain it.

In March of that year, the fine old stone bridge, which competent critics had compared in its graceful curves to the Rialto of Venice, and which was only three years short of a century old, was pulled down under the direction of Mr. Penistone, C.E., the resident engineer of the works. The remains of the well-proportioned arch were let into the river on the 23rd of March, 1855, when about 100 tons weight fell with a crash into the bed of the stream. Later in the year, the foundation stone of the old bridge was deposited in the Museum by Mr. Leather, the contractor. This stone shows that the foundation was laid in June, 1758,\* and an advertisement in the *Norwich Mercury* of March 4th in that year, thus refers to the contemplated erection of this stone bridge:—"Notice is hereby given that the bridge over the river, in the town of Wisbech, will be taken down in order to be rebuilt, and that until the same shall be rebuilt, a ferry over the said river will be provided for all sorts of carriages." This ferry went "from the shoar near the Workhouse† to the opposite shoar," and as the banks then sloped gradually to the water's edge the approach would be easy. The bridge cost £2,250, and was an ornamental and substantial structure with an elliptical arch of 74 feet span, superseding a wooden one shown in Dr. Massey's engraving.

Early in 1856, after many delays, preparations were made for

\* The inscription, engraved on a plate, is as follows:—*Ex Ligneo Surrexit Lapideus. A.D. 1758. Esto perpetuus.*

† The old Workhouse was in the Horsefair.

the foundations of the iron bridge, the Green Dragon Inn and adjacent property being removed to enlarge the approaches. On April 11th, 1856, a few days after the news had arrived of the signing of a Treaty of Peace with Russia, ending the Crimean War, the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone of the iron bridge took place, by the Mayor (Mr. J. E. Fraser), who had been re-elected to that office, which he had previously served in 1853. The Marquis of Huntly, Chairman of the Nene Valley Commissioners, Mr. J. W. Childers, Mr. J. W. Rendel, engineer, and Mr. Leather, contractor, were present. A silver trowel was presented to the Mayor with which to perform the ceremony. At the dinner held subsequently, at the Rose and Crown Hotel, the Marquis of Huntly presiding, and Mr. Borthwick, C.E., being also present, it was stated that the bridge, when it was completed, would be the largest opening bridge in the world! At this time it was mentioned that the total liabilities of the town under the Nene Valley Acts of 1848, 1852, and 1854, including Sir John Pakington's award, amounted to £65,500, and, in addition to this heavy expenditure, the Town Council was much exercised as to the stability of the piling. Subsequently, the materials of the old Butter Cross, built in 1804, at a cost of £2,500, were sold by auction and realized £219, the lead fetching £93. The work of demolition commenced in June, 1856, a portable framework being subsequently erected on the Market Hill, for the accommodation of the vendors of butter, poultry, eggs, &c., until some more permanent arrangement could be devised, a temporary and unsatisfactory provision which has been perpetuated for nearly forty years, much to the detriment of the general trade of the town. In October, 1856, the Nene Valley Commissioners found that they required more money for their works, and resolved to apply for powers to raise £50,000. Some delay was occasioned by the death of Mr. Rendel, their engineer, in November, Mr. Fowler, C.E., subsequently receiving the appointment by a majority of votes over Mr. Hawkshaw. An Investigation Committee, appointed by the Commissioners, increased the consternation felt at the cost of the works, when on the basis of Mr. Fowler's report and estimate of February, 1857, it was intimated that £150,000 would be required to complete them, and that Wisbech would be expected to contribute £36,000. Of course, the Wisbech Corporation determined to strenuously resist the imposition of further burdens, and the Middle Level Commissioners joined in the opposition, which this time proved successful, for in July, 1857, the House of Commons' Committee

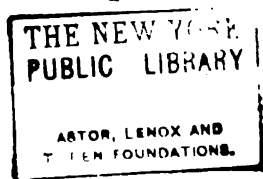


**WISBECH STONE BRIDGE.**  
**ERECTED 1758. REMOVED 1855.**  
*From a Photo by E. Johnson.*



**THE BUTTER CROSS AND JUSTICES' ROOMS.**  
**ERECTED 1804. REMOVED 1856.**  
*From a Photo by Thos. Craddock.*





rejected it, declaring the preamble of the Nene Valley Bill not proved. The Town Council, a few days subsequently, called upon the Commissioners to complete the iron bridge without delay, and in September, 1857, a public meeting was held at the Sessions House, the Rev. Algernon Peyton presiding, supported by the Hon. Eliot Yorke, M.P., who had been elected a county representative early in the same year, and Mr. Mein, the Duke of Bedford's agent. The condition of the river was taken into serious consideration, and a committee appointed to confer with the engineer as to what steps should be taken to advance the works. Mr. Fowler was instructed to complete Wisbech Bridge without delay, and on November 9th, 1857, this structure, which had cost £15,000, was opened a few minutes before noon, by the Mayor (Mr. Thos. Steed Watson), who was driven over in his carriage to the Town Hall, where he was re-elected Mayor. Mr. Watson received 12 votes out of 22, Messrs. William Dawbarn, Richard Young, and Mr. Robert Wherry (who withdrew), being also proposed. A minute was adopted by the Corporation recording the opening of the Bridge, and it was stated in conversation that the Mayor was the first to be driven over, Mr. Richard Young was the first to drive himself over, and Mr. Robert Dawbarn the first to ride over on horseback. This tubular bridge and the hydraulic machinery for opening it, were the work of Messrs. Armstrong and Co., of the Elswick Works, Newcastle-on-Tyne, now better known as heavy ordnance makers. A tower of corrugated iron was constructed on the south side, in which the machinery was placed. Five or six men were employed to work the machinery, which, by means of hydraulic pressure, raised the accumulator, a perpendicular cylinder, loaded to the extent of forty tons. By turning a tap, the pressure was communicated to the cylinder upon which the bridge revolved, and the weight of the accumulator moving the chains, swung the ponderous mass on its pivot to the piling on the south side, making a clear opening up and down the river. Nearly a week before the formal opening, the writer remembers being on the bridge when it was swung for the first time, at six o'clock in the morning, the Mayor and a few members of the Corporation having turned out at that early hour to witness the test. The steady motion of the bridge as it swung round to the south side showed that the machinery was equal to the strain, and it remained "open" until four o'clock in the afternoon, when it was again put across. It is doubtful whether any other attempt was ever made to swing this ponderous and ugly structure. Ultimately the machinery, through

disuse, became rusty and unreliable, and the Admiralty were induced to give their consent for the bridge to become a fixed one. The removal of the tower, and the throwing of its site into the approaches was undertaken, the machinery being disposed of, and to minimise its ugliness, the bridge was shortened, that portion being taken away which was intended to balance the opposite end during the process of swinging. This has greatly improved the approaches, and made the bridge less of an eye-sore, however useful its wide roadway may be. The old stone bridge, though possessing architectural beauty, was extremely narrow and dangerous by reason of its steep approaches. Heavily laden waggons coming down the decline into Bridge Street, had been known to be precipitated into the glass windows of Mr. Smith Flanders' shop (now Messrs. Hunter and Vassar's), and when the heavy caravans of a travelling menagerie tried to cross, a great deal of difficulty was experienced in surmounting the steep incline from the south side, in order to reach the Old Market. The present bridge, unsightly though it be, provides an excellent roadway and level approaches. Ornament has given place to utility, yet both might have been attained by the designer, and the effect of the view from the Brinks, one of the most striking parts of the town, would have been much enhanced. The bridge is not, however open to the objection of the rustic who found one of Telford's great bridges, so level as to seem, what it in fact was, only a part of the road. "Call ye that a bridge!" he said contemptuously, "ye neither ken when ye're on't, nor when ye're off it."

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE BATTLE OF THE DAMS. A MEMORABLE CORPORATION  
VICTORY.

ONE of the most stirring incidents of the last fifty years, and one in which Wisbech gained a notable but bloodless victory, was the winning of the locally famous "Battle of the Dams." When the Nene Valley Commissioners had obtained powers to replenish their funds, in 1855, they proceeded—instead of completing the unfinished works through Wisbech, as the Act intended should have been done—to apply the additional capital to the portion of the scheme above Bevis Hall. Notwithstanding that Wisbech had punctually paid the heavy contributions imposed by Parliament upon the Borough, its claim that the portions of the scheme which were left uncompleted should be first finished, was disregarded by the Commissioners and illegal works were undertaken.\* Among these were two dams, one at Waldersea,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles above Wisbech, and the second at Guyhirn, three miles higher up the river. Mr. Botterell, the secretary of the Com-

\* The Act of 1855 provided that it shall not be lawful for the said Incorporated Commissioners to execute any works above Bevis Hall, until the works authorised and required to be executed below or seaward of Bevis Hall shall have been fully executed and completed, and the completion thereof certified by the engineer for the time being directing the works, and the certificate of completion published in one or more newspapers in Cambridgeshire or Northamptonshire. That the Commissioners shall complete the works hereby authorised in the Lower Division, and shall not commence any other works until the works in the Lower Division be completed.

missioners, alleged that the dams were erected by the contractor without authority, and were for a temporary purpose only, viz., the excavation of the river in the upper division.\* Upon these and other works however, £40,000 was spent, and it seemed evident that the Commissioners had not only adopted them, but permitted them to be strengthened with a view to their becoming permanent structures. When once the dams were completed, the engineers shrank from the responsibility of removing them and possibly the Commissioners found consolation in the thought that the supply of fresh water to the Duke of Bedford's property in the North Level was, for the time, assured. But the effect of their construction was to cause the river to silt up to a depth of seven feet in some parts, to the serious injury of the commercial business of Wisbech. From 1830 to 1848, trade had been flourishing; in 1849, the Mungo Park, a large barque, discharged its cargo in the port, and a barque, the "Richard Young," was built and launched a month later. But when the river deteriorated by silting-up, the trade rapidly declined, the port dues were wholly absorbed, instead of being a source of revenue, and the inhabitants were compelled to contribute large sums out of the Borough rate. Mr. Robert Stephenson, in his preliminary report made to the Corporation in October, 1857, mentions that the dam at Waldersea had an opening or waterway of about twenty-four feet, and that at Guyhirn twelve feet; there were also stop gates at Waldersea to prevent the tide from flowing above that point. Considerable dredging had been effected between Wisbech and Guyhirn, and he anticipated that the two main sources of danger would be from land floods and excessively high sea tides, the opening in the dams being inadequate for heavy land floods. In case of high tides, either the destruction of the dams would take place, or the river would overflow its banks and do great damage. He remarked that the proper spirit in which to approach the subject would be to merge all conflicting interests of the Nene Valley question and view the position as if a great calamity were imminent, against which all parties should strenuously combine to find a remedy. As to palliative measures, he reported that although nothing would have induced him to incur the responsibility of placing those dams in that position, on the other hand, he would not sanction their removal until adequate precautionary measures had been adopted. Consequently, he recommended a wooden staunch to be constructed, with self-acting tidal gates opening seawards, and with slackers to admit tidal waters, which

\* *The Nene in Danger*, pamphlet published in 1862.

would cost £3,000. A few months later, a more elaborate report to a similar effect was issued, signed not only by Mr. Robert Stephenson, but by his nephew, Mr. G. R. Stephenson, and by Mr. Bidder, a formidable array of names intended to neutralise opposition by the mere weight of authority. But Mr. Stephenson's proposal to suffer the dams to remain, and to erect a staunch was altogether repudiated by the people of Wisbech, who did not fail to point out to Mr. Robert Stephenson, that his opinions expressed in this report were at variance with those previously held by him.

Such was the serious condition of the river when early in 1858, Mr. Richard Young drew the attention of the Corporation to the gravity of the situation in relation to the trade of the port. The Port and Harbour Committee was summoned, and at once forwarded a petition to the Admiralty, representing that the dams at Guyhirn and Waldersea, and the throttle at Wisbech, were the cause of a dangerous obstruction. Mr. George Hurwood, C.E., who had held an enquiry at the beginning of the works, was again sent down, and viewed the dams. The result of this investigation was that in June, 1858, the Nene Valley Commissioners received notice from the Admiralty requiring their removal, on the ground that they were detrimental to the tidal flow of the river, and calculated to cause serious obstruction by the silting-up of the channel. But the Nene Valley Commissioners, upon whom this order was duly served, were unwilling to comply, and arranged to interview the Lords of the Admiralty, in order to obtain an alteration of the decision. The Mayor of Wisbech (Mr. Thos. Steed Watson), not agreeing with this course, intimated that the Corporation would again petition for the fulfilment of the order. In furtherance of this determination, the Wisbech Burgesses assembled on the 2nd of July, 1858, in public meeting at the Sessions House, and represented that £120,000 had been contributed by Wisbech to river improvements, of which £60,000 had been paid to the Nene Valley Commissioners, but that in consequence of the dams and throttle, the river was rapidly silting up. A memorial to that effect was sent to the Admiralty, at the suggestion of the Commissioners, who dispatched another civil engineer, Mr. J. R. McClean, to inspect the river, the appointment of Mr. Walker, C.E., for that purpose, having been disapproved by the Corporation. He, too, reported against the dams. If, Mr. McClean said, the Nene Valley Commissioners had completed the works in Wisbech, before commencing works above Bevis Hall, none of the difficulties would have occurred.

The reason alleged by the Commissioners for not completing the works, that of a deficiency of funds, was inadmissible in view of the other works undertaken.

As an illustration of the deplorable condition of the Nene at this time, we are told that about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles above Wisbech, a man named Thomas Hircock, waded across the river at low tide, and the water was not more than knee deep! Some bullocks belonging to Mr. Richard Young were actually driven across the river, opposite to Osborne House. The channel of the river silted up more or less over seven miles below the dam, and in some places as much as seven feet of sediment formed in a few weeks. The tides, arrested by an immovable staunch, also overflowed the banks and did considerable damage. Several other engineers, who were consulted, condemned the dams, though some contended that it was more dangerous to remove them than to let them remain. One member of the Council proposed to introduce into Parliament a Bill to be entitled the "Wisbech Corporation Imminent Danger Act." In the meantime, the Nene Valley Commissioners were casting about for some remedy, in order to avoid carrying out the Admiralty order. Three schemes were suggested, to cost respectively £3,000, £100,000, or £250,000, and the Commissioners would have tried to arrange to put down temporary tide gates at Wisbech, but for the fact that no funds were happily available. The Corporation continued to most vigorously demand the removal of the dams, and having elected Mr. Richard Young, Mayor, initiated further active steps to accomplish its object. But the Nene Valley Commissioners were obdurate and determined, their engineer asking for £2,000 to strengthen the Waldersea dam instead of removing it. On the 8th of December, 1858, the Town Clerk (Mr. Francis Jackson), served a notice on behalf of the Corporation, upon Mr. Archbould, Clerk of the Nene Valley Commissioners, requiring them to remove the dams or in default of compliance within a month, proceedings would be taken to procure their removal. The Corporation instructed Mr. Thomas Page, C.E.,\* formerly acting engineer of the Thames Tunnel, and the month having expired, applied to the Isle Justices for a summons under the 14th section of the Act of 1852, to show cause why an order should not be made against the Commissioners for the removal of the dams. The hearing took place on January 22nd, 1859, at which the Town

\* Mr. Page was the only engineer who advised the removal of the dams. No engineer of Great George Street could be found to admit the dams were causing such dangerous mischief.

Clerk (Mr. Francis Jackson) represented the Corporation, and Mr. Webster, barrister\* (father of the Attorney General) the Commissioners. A long investigation took place, Mr. Webster speaking for four-and-a-half-hours on behalf of his clients, and calling Mr. Fowler, C.E., the engineer of the works, who admitted that there were in some places, seven feet of deposit, but solemnly assured the court that it would be an act of madness to remove the dams without first preparing the banks.† The magistrates gave their decision in favour of the complainants, the Corporation, and ordered the obstructions to the channel to be removed by the Commissioners in the following terms:—

It is adjudged that the complaint in this case for suffering certain unnecessary obstructions and impediments, to wit, two dams in the river Nene, is true, and it is found and adjudged that such obstructions and impediments do still remain and are unnecessary, and are suffered by the defendants (the Nene Valley Commissioners), and having due regard to all the evidence laid before this court, it is adjudged and directed, that the dam in the said river, at or near Waldersea Sluice, be removed, such removal to be forthwith made and carried into effect, by the Nene Valley Commissioners, their engineers, agents, servants or workmen, and that the costs and expenses attending such removal be wholly borne and paid by the said Commissioners.

The decision was received in a crowded court with great cheering. It was subsequently alleged that, previous to the hearing, the Mayor and Corporation had made preparations for the removal of the dams, and had engaged a large number of workmen, to whom they had supplied necessary implements. Certainly, without waiting for the order of the Justices to be carried into effect by the Commissioners, within a few hours after the judgment was given, several hundreds of persons, a number of whom were workmen, proceeded along the South Brink to the Waldersea dam, equipped with spades, crowbars, chains, and accompanied by a waggon load

\* The Attorney General, Sir Richard Webster, Q.C., writes in reference to this case:—"I well remember this case. The counsel who appeared was not myself, but my father, Thomas Webster, Q.C. I rather think you will find (but as to this I am not quite sure) that there was a later hearing of the same case. The counsel who opposed was Mr. Price, Q.C., afterwards County Court Judge at Norwich and Wisbech, &c. It was a trial of great importance, and turned largely on considerations connected with the flow of tidal water." His Honor Judge Price, to whom the Attorney General refers, has recently retired from the County Court Judgeship, which he had held for many years, and periodically visited Wisbech when on his circuit.

† A pamphlet entitled *The Nene in Danger*, subsequently remarks:—"In olden time the pretensions of a prophet were tested by the event, and if engineers were judged by the same rule, what would be the worth of Mr. Fowler's testimony? No bank was breached, nor house washed away!"



of sugar hogsheds, as well as a barrel of tar, for making fires to throw light upon their intended operations. The members of the Corporation who were present were Messrs. Geo. Dawbarn, John Gapp, W. Hutchinson, and John Gardiner. It was soon after midnight when the preliminaries were arranged, and under the direction of Mr. Page, C.E., the work was vigorously commenced, 120 men, with the aid of the light obtained from a bonfire and by lanterns, proceeding to destroy the dam at Waldersea. The doors were first broken down, amidst the shouts of the people, and sent floating along the tide to Wisbech; the massive piles were sawn asunder, and notwithstanding the enormous strength of the dam, before morning such havoc had been made that the water passed freely down the river. Mr. Botterell, secretary to the Nene Valley Commissioners, hearing of what was taking place, applied to the Mayor and Town Clerk, who hastily drove to the spot the next morning, and warned the workmen that the Corporation had not sanctioned such precipitate action. The workmen desisted for a time, but the next night, the destruction was renewed and greatly accelerated by the dam being set on fire. Mr. Hutchinson, a contractor, of March, superintended the work, and on Saturday night, on the information of the resident engineer of the Commissioners, he was taken into custody, on the charge of directing the operations, but was admitted to bail. Nevertheless, even this did not deter the men from proceeding, and after midnight on Sunday the work recommenced, not only at Waldersea, but the dam at Guyhirn was now attacked, and being less strongly constructed, it was nearly all cleared away by Tuesday afternoon. By this summary means a free and open navigation to Peterborough was obtained. The Nene Valley Commissioners meanwhile applied for and were granted an interim injunction by Vice-Chancellor Wood, prohibiting the removal of the Waldersea dam, and Mr. Shelford, their engineer, took possession of Guyhirn dam for the purpose of repairing it. The town was thrown into a state of great excitement by the arrest of six men, John Shaw, New Bell Inn, John Shaw, jun., Jonathan Cox, millwright, William Poppleton,\* sailmaker, Jos. Sallabanks, carpenter, and George Leedham, on a warrant by Inspector Stockings, charged with being concerned in the destruction of the

\* The notice of recognizance of Mr. William Poppleton is in the possession of the writer, and shows that he was bound over in £50 himself, and in £25 each of his sureties (Mr. A. W. Healey and Mr. John Gardiner), to keep the peace until the hearing of the case, the document bearing the signatures of the Rev Henry Jackson and Mr. Charles Boucher, the sitting justices.

dam, and they were lodged in the Sessions House cells. Messrs. R. and T. J. Hutchinson, March, were also charged with a like offence, and all the accused were bailed out, except Mr. T. J. Hutchinson, who was kept in custody. On the 5th February, the accused men appeared at the Isle Police Court (the Sessions House), when Mr. George Lewis, the well known London solicitor, prosecuted on behalf of the Commissioners, and Messrs. Naylor and Metcalfe, barristers, instructed by Messrs. Wise and Dawbarn, defended. Summonses against Messrs. Geo. Dawbarn, John Gapp, Bernard Cooney, and George Brown, were also heard at the same time. After a six hours' hearing, the magistrates decided that no felony had been committed, and that they would simply require each defendant to enter into his own recognizances to the amount of £50 for twelve months. The defendants, however, declined to do this, and the magistrates thought it prudent not to press it, on a promise being given that nothing but legal steps would be taken in the future. As soon as the decision of the Bench became known, the bells were rung, a band paraded the town, and there was general rejoicing. The inhabitants were throughout remarkably united and determined in resisting the proceedings of the Commissioners. Nor was this surprising. The river had been daily becoming less navigable, the trade of the port was nearly annihilated, consequently the income from the dues was seriously diminished, and the deficiency had to be made up by a Borough rate, in order to raise the interest due on the moneys borrowed on mortgage of the whole of the Corporation estates, for the purpose of meeting the contributions towards the river works. The injury which the port sustained may be gathered from the fact that whilst in 1855, the deficiency on the Port dues to be made up by a Borough rate amounted to £300, it amounted to £1,700 in 1857, and up to November, 1858, it was £1,350 for only half a year, or nine times the amount in 1855. Nevertheless such was the patriotism of Wisbechians at this remarkable crisis, that a guarantee fund of £5,000 was opened in order to pay the expenses of the accused in the "Battle of the Dams," and to help the Corporation to vigorously oppose the further proceedings which were known to be pending in the Chancery Court. A meeting was held on the 9th February, the Mayor presiding, and promises amounting to £3,400 were given. A few days later, an intimation was received that the Commissioners had amended their Bill in Chancery against the Mayor and Corporation, by adding the names of three members of that body—Messrs. Geo. Dawbarn,

John Gapp, and John Gardiner. These three gentlemen had all been present at the destruction of the dams, the last-named having helped to throw some light upon the whole proceedings, not only in the columns of the *Advertiser*, but also with a bull's eye lantern, which he carried on the eventful night, and which is still preserved as a memento of a memorable chapter in local annals. Mr. Geo. Dawbarn was an energetic promoter of the destructive work, and Mr. Gapp assisted in maintaining the public rights to an unobstructed navigation. The suit was heard before Vice-Chancellor Sir W. Page Wood (afterwards Lord Hatherley), the hearing in the Court of Chancery extending over two days. Without going into the defendants' case, the Vice-Chancellor dismissed the injunction against the Corporation, and ordered the Nene Valley Commissioners to pay all costs. They had no more right, the learned Vice-Chancellor said, to maintain these obstructions in the river Nene until their works were completed, than to place a barrier across Cheapside. As to the other defendants, Messrs. Geo. Dawbarn (who was absent in Scotland), John Gapp, and John Gardiner, the court dismissed the Bill against them, but without costs. Once more Wisbech had come off victorious in the struggle, and great rejoicings again signalled the arrival of the good news from London in the Borough. The bells were rung, flags were hoisted, and the Mayor and Mayoress (Mr. and Mrs. Richard Young), the Town Clerk, Ald. Wherry, and Mr. Gardiner, were met at the station by an enthusiastic crowd. Having taken their seats in the Mayor's carriage (accompanied by Ald. Stevens), they were drawn through the town, flanked by men with flaming torches, to the Rose and Crown Hotel, where the Mayor and Town Clerk congratulated the town on the triumphant issue. Demonstrations were made opposite the residences of the occupants of the carriage, the band playing, and the streets being thronged with spectators of the scene. Two very large bonfires, for which materials were furnished by or taken from the residents, were lighted on the Market Place and in the Old Market. On the former, a large log of timber from Waldersea dam, as well as a dressed-up effigy of an opponent deemed obnoxious to the town, were consigned to the flames. "Such a scene of enthusiasm," remarked the local chronicler, "had not been witnessed in Wisbech within living memory, and would not readily be forgotten."

The Nene Valley Commissioners made some attempt, in spite of the adverse decision, to commence a fresh staunch

about 150 yards above the old one, but were immediately informed of the intention of the Corporation to arrest any one who might take such an illegal step. In pursuance of the instructions of the Corporation, Mr. Hutchinson and his men at once resumed the complete destruction of Waldersea dam, the tide running through with a scour which soon perceptibly improved the channel of the river. At a meeting held at the Corn Exchange to form an association to watch river interests, it was stated that since the dams had been removed, there had been the highest tide at the lighthouses for three years previously, and that the river had deepened three feet. The next step was to give notice to the Commissioners of the intention to remove the check gates and frame of the throttle near the Bridge, and additional impetus was given to this by the sinking of three lighters belonging to the Mayor, caused by the damage they received in passing over the submerged weir at this point. Two months after, the Isle of Ely Justices made an order against the Nene Valley Commissioners, and under the directions of Mr. Page, C.E., the weir was as speedily removed as the dams. Subsequently a handsome silver candelabra was presented to the Mayor (Mr. Richard Young), for his energetic services to the port at this crisis. A few days later, application was made to the Nene Valley Commissioners for £544, the cost of removing the dams. In March, 1860, the Corporation had not received the amount, and permission was obtained to commence proceedings against the Commissioners for the recovery of the costs, a sum of £470 being ultimately offered and accepted.

In June, 1860, the temporary wooden bridge across the river, opposite the White Hart Hotel, was removed, and the Town Council considered in private the recommendations of Mr. Page, C.E., for the improvement of the Nene, which were afterwards published, but were far too costly to be undertaken. He proposed a new cut—like several eminent engineers who preceded him—between the North Brink brewery and Pickard's Lane, straightening the course of the river. The site of the old channel he contemplated filling up, and converting the space into an ornamental pleasure garden! Further down the river, Mr. Page suggested the construction of a dock, 2,200 feet in length, between the Leverington Road and the lower end of the Horse Shoe bend, opposite Osborne House, by making a back cut between these points and dockising the old river channel, a lock being placed at the lower end and an embankment at the upper end. As to the fresh water supply, he intended to convert Morton's

Leam into an aqueduct, to be fed at the upper end from Broad water, to deepen the channel to Peterborough, and carry out other works of improvement. For this report, which was printed and published, the Council paid subsequently 400 guineas, Mr. Page's services in the Chancery proceedings extending over a long period, and costing altogether £1,452. So far as the three defendants, Messrs. G. Dawbarn, John Gapp, and John Gardiner were concerned, it was some time before their law costs were met by the town. At first they had to pay some portion out of their own pockets, until popular opinion almost compelled the Corporation to reimburse the amount, in consideration of the services that they had rendered in assisting in the removal of a dangerous and injurious construction, and braving the consequences of the Chancery suit. In the Battle of the Dams enquiry, one singular feature of the evidence given before the Isle Magistrates was as to the payment of the men who assisted in the removal of the dam. They all helped themselves to the cash that was forthcoming, so that no one might be held responsible for or become involved in paying them for their destructive work. One man said he did not know in the least by whom he was employed, but seeing eight shillings on the table he picked it up and walked off! Another had rowed a boat about and picked up six shillings from a table, on which he supposed somebody had laid it for him. All were determined that the responsibility of removing the dams should not be borne by individuals but by the whole town, and the Commissioners found themselves deservedly and signally beaten from the local Police Court to the Court of Chancery, and compelled to abandon their costly and destructive works in the river Nene, which had threatened to ruin its trade and commerce.

More than two years elapsed from the "Battle of the Dams" and its attendant litigation, before the Nene Valley Commissioners initiated any further measure. On the 1st of August, 1861, Mr. Fowler, C.E., reported to the Nene Valley Commissioners, in view of an intended application to Parliament for further powers to raise funds for liquidating the liabilities of the Commissioners incurred in the execution of works recommended in Mr. Rendel's report of 1849. In spite of the strenuous protests of the Mayor and Corporation of Wisbech, it was decided to prepare a Bill based on the engineer's recommendations. The most injurious proposal of this Nene Valley Drainage and Navigation Improvement Bill was "to make at a cost of £7,000 a submerged weir, dam, or other works, in the bed of the Nene, with opening gates, and sluice or lock, below the Dog-in-a-

Doublet Bridge." The object was to hold up the fresh water during the driest seasons, till it obtained sufficient head to irrigate the Thorney estate of the Duke of Bedford. It was argued by its opponents that this would silt up the channel below the sluice, would hold up the fresh water on the Peterborough side, which that city had paid £1,500 to have carried away, and would obstruct navigation seriously. A pamphlet, *To Whom Does the Nene Belong*, issued at this time (1862), argued "By the time the tide reaches Wisbech, fifteen or sixteen miles from the sea, it is already high water at sea. This flow continues till its momentum is reduced, and becomes equal to the momentum of the opposite fresh water stream flowing from Peterborough. The point, therefore, which the tide reaches depends upon the head of fresh water it has to contend against. Sometimes this point is no higher than Guyhirn, in ordinary cases it reaches the Cross Guns, and in good spring tides with but little down water it reaches Northey Gravel or the Dog-in-a-Doublet alone. As soon as the tide reaches the fresh water and while its momentum remains the greater, it lifts it and drives it before it without mingling with it. But when the point is reached where the forces become equal and opposite, a pause ensues, and deposit for a short time is formed. Were they to rest always at the same spot, a shoal would soon be produced; but this is prevented by the variations of tides and fresh water which cause the point of rest to change daily. Here then the tidal impulse being arrested, then gradually destroyed and finally reversed, the fresh water soon imparts its momentum to the tidal water, and the ebb has this supplemental cause to add its force, and strengthen it to carry back the material which the flood brought in. Thus the tendency to stagnation for any length of time, sufficient for injurious deposit, is prevented, and the fresh water, by stimulating the ebb at its most inert period, preserves a sufficient quantity of motion to maintain the transporting power of the water and keep the river open. But if the fresh water be entirely cut off by a sluice at the Dog-in-a-Doublet, the tide having no fresh water to arrest it, will rise higher than otherwise, and several miles of its course will be a slow detrimental progress, during which large portions of the suspended matter will settle on the bed of the river." In addition to the Dog-in-a-Doublet sluice, the Bill contemplated a sluice into Morton's Leam, a sluice for the regulation of the navigation of Whittlesea Delph, the excavation and deepening of the Nene between Guyhirn and Peterborough, and the making navigable a portion of Morton's Leam. Mr. J. G. Cockburn

Curtis, C.E., was ordered by the Admiralty to inspect the river, and reported that the proposed works would be highly injurious to the navigation, and recommended that the Dog-in-a-Doublet sluice should not be sanctioned. In January, 1862, a public meeting at Wisbech authorised the Corporation to oppose the Bill. In March, 1862, Admiralty enquiries were held at Wisbech and Peterborough, the Government Inspector, Mr. G. Cockburn Curtis taking a steam tug to inspect the channel, in company with the engineer and others. His report was laid before the House of Commons' Committee on March 24th, Sir Chas. Douglas presiding. Mr. W. L. Ollard, solicitor, was allowed to appear on behalf of certain Wisbech ratepayers, and the testimony of many eminent engineers, as well as the Mayor, Town Clerk, and members of the Corporation was taken. The enquiry was a protracted one, extending over nearly two months, during which time evidence was being sifted, counsel heard, and a compromise arranged. The Corporation of Wisbech, the Wisbech ratepayers, the Middle Level, the Bedford Level, the Waldersea and Redmore Commissioners, and the Duke of Bedford were all represented and heard. It may be noted that while the enquiry was in progress, an adjournment of a few days took place, when Mr. Marjoribanks, M.P., for Berwick (now Lord Tweedmouth), with other members of the committee, visited Wisbech and inspected the river in boats. The decision was not given until May 12th, 1862, the committee refusing to allow a sluice at the Dog-in-a-Doublet, or elsewhere, across the river channel, and urging parties to come to an arrangement by which the liabilities incurred by the Nene Valley Commissioners could be met, and necessary works between Wisbech and Peterborough undertaken. For this purpose the inquiry was adjourned for three days, when the committee declared the preamble proved, the Dog and Doublet sluice clauses being struck out, and the Commissioners of Sewers expressed their willingness to resume the maintenance of the banks. Clauses were then attacked, and finally the committee assessed the contributions of the various interests, Wisbech being adjudged to pay £8,000, and the Corporation as some compensation for the imposition of this burden, to have the Halfpenny Tonnage Dues and half the Navigation Tolls from Wisbech to Peterborough absolutely, as well as the surplus of the other half. The promoters were refused their costs. This Nene Valley Winding Up Bill, as it was called, passed through the House of Lords with no other alteration than some verbal amendments. The costs of the opposition to this Bill were about

£1,765, and a further sum of £20 was voted for the removal of what remained of the throttle. The rates at this time were about 9s. in the £, and there was a possibility of a further increase. Added to this, the Middle Level sluice had burst while the Nene Valley inquiry was in progress, and was causing great anxiety, owing to the difficulty of constructing a sufficient dam to take its place.

The following statement shows the contributions payable by the different authorities to the Nene Valley Drainage and Navigation Works, between 1852 and 1854:—

## GROSS CONTRIBUTORS UNDER ACT OF 1852.

Contributors.	Amount.		
	£	s.	d.
Outfall Tax Proprietors ... ..	19,061	6	5
Wisbech Corporation ....	40,000	0	0
Duke of Bedford ... ..	2,000	0	0
North Level Commissioners ... ..	2,500	0	0
Bedford Level Corporation ..	1,500	0	0
Waldersea Commissioners ... ..	5,500	0	0
Peterborough Improvement Commissioners ...	1,000	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£71,561	6	5

## ANNUAL PAYMENTS UNDER ACT OF 1852.

	£	s.	d.
Wash Land Proprietors ... ..	1,499	8	6
Wisbech Corporation Half-penny Tonnage (1857)	177	8	5
Commissioners of Sewers for Redmoor ...	44	9	6
Commissioners of Sewers (banks) ... ..	580	12	6
Navigation Tolls between Wisbech and Peterborough ... ..	749	1	11
	<hr/>		
	£3,051	0	10

CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS £55,000 UNDER REFERENCE  
(ACT OF 1854).

Contributors.	Amount.		
	£	s.	d.
Outfall Tax Proprietors ... ..	12,875	0	0
Wash Tax Proprietors ... ..	7,027	10	0
Wisbech Corporation ... ..	12,000	0	0
Duke of Bedford ... ..	1,500	0	0
North Level Commissioners... ..	3,000	0	0
Bedford Level Corporation ... ..	10,000	0	0
Waldersea Commissioners ... ..	1,580	0	0
Commissioners of Sewers (Redmoor) ... ..	4,447	10	0
Commissioners of Sewers (Banks) ... ..	2,049	4	3
Peterborough Improvement Commissioners ...	520	15	9
	<hr/>		
	£55,000	0	0



CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS CONTINGENT SUM OF £15,000  
UNDER REFERENCE (ACT OF 1854).

Contributors.	Amount.		
	£	s.	d.
Outfall Tax Proprietors ... ..	2,414	1	4
Wash Tax Proprietors ... ..	3,513	15	0
Wisbech Corporation ... ..	4,670	12	6
Duke of Bedford ... ..			
North Level Commissioners ... ..	493	5	0
Bedford Level Corporation ... ..	1,032	17	0
Waldersea Commissioners ... ..	628	8	8
Commissioners of Sewers (Redmore) ... ..	650	8	11
Commissioners of Sewers (Banks) ... ..	1,448	11	7
Peterborough Improvement Commissioners ... ..	148	0	0

£15,000 0 0\*

The contributions made by the Corporation towards the improvement of the river channel were as follows:—To the Nene Improvement Fund £300 per annum, equal to £6,000; for improving the channel through the town by widening the narrowest part, upwards of £5,000; to the new Sutton Bridge, £14,000; to the Nene Outfall Works, £30,000; to Woodhouse Marsh Cut (Pauper's Cut) £6,737; to the Nene Valley Drainage and Navigation Improvements £40,000, and the produce of a duty of a half-penny penny per ton, valued at £3,540; also a further sum of £16,670 under Sir John Pakington's award, making a total of £121,947. In addition to this, there was a sum of £8,000 paid by Wisbech under the Winding Up Act, making a total expended for river works from Wisbech resources only, in about 40 years, of £130,000.† More was thus paid to the Nene Valley Works than would probably have made Mr. Stephenson's proposed new "Back Cut" channel on the north side of the town.

Briefly summarising the recommendations which have been made from time to time, it appears that back-cut schemes at Wisbech have been recommended by Messrs. Yeoman 1769, Edwards 1771, Rennie 1814, Sir John Rennie 1840, Robert Stephenson 1848 and 1858, Bidder and G. R. Stephenson 1858, and partially by Page 1860. Mr. Telford in 1821, and Mr. Rendel in 1849, expressed their preference for continuing the river through Wisbech. A pen sluice at or near Dog-in-the Doublet, for regulating the fresh water supply, has been advocated

\* Report of Mr. John Fowler, C.E., on Nene Valley and Drainage Improvement, 1857.

† Report of Mr. Thos. Page, C.E., to the Corporation of Wisbech, 1860.

by Mr. Telford, Sir John Rennie, Messrs. Stephenson, Bidder, and Fowler, whilst Mr. Rendel did not see the necessity for a work of this kind, and Mr. Page suggested a method by which he considered the river course might be kept clear, and at the same time an ample supply of fresh water secured.

The first meeting of the newly constituted body, the Nene Navigation Commissioners, Third Division, which, under the Winding Up Act of 1862, had taken the place of the Nene Valley Commissioners below Peterborough, was held on the 30th September, 1862, with the Mayor as chairman, and Mr. Francis Jackson as clerk. Immediately after the re-election of Mr. Young as Mayor for the fifth time, the facilities for carrying on trade in the port were greatly increased by the completion on November 11th, 1862, of the Harbour Line by the Great Eastern Railway, although it was not formally opened until February, 1863, when the Mayor's trucks of coals were drawn by a decorated engine, into his own yard. In March, 1863, the Town Council affixed its seal to the mortgages on the Harbour Tolls to meet the Nene Valley contribution, and thus ended a struggle which had lasted some twelve to fourteen years, in which the Corporation was saddled with a heavy debt, amounting in all to £71,000. Wisbech had destroyed the dam in the face of the law, by force, yet the Court of Chancery sanctioned the action of destruction, and decided that its retention was entirely against legality and right. The necessity of maintaining a good channel and outfall by preserving a free course for both tidal and land waters, and the fact that every impediment in the river, whether sluice, dam, or weir, was prejudicial to navigation and drainage interests had been triumphantly and, it is to be hoped, irrevocably established. It was only by the splendid energy and determination of some of its leading men that the river, with its declining trade and commerce, was rescued from a condition of neglect and mismanagement of the most disastrous kind. To the Mayors and Corporation of those stirring times, who were backed by loyal citizens, as well as by the local press, all honour is due, and the record of the famous Battle of the Dams ought to be cherished in our annals, as a conspicuous instance of a courageous stand made by a public body in the face of most powerful and determined interests, which, if they had not been strenuously and successfully fought, might have permanently ruined the trade of the port of Wisbech.

## CHAPTER IX.

## DOCK SCHEMES AND RIVER IMPROVEMENT WORKS.

## FAILURE OF SUTTON BRIDGE DOCK.



EN years elapsed before any attempt was made to undertake further river works. Wisbech had been heavily burdened with the cost of Parliamentary fights and the debt imposed upon the ratepayers by the Nene Valley Works. Nevertheless the inhabitants were not disheartened, and the improvement of the river, with a view to bringing increased trade to the port, soon again occupied the attention of the Corporation. For a long time there had been a feeling that the port required floating water to attract increased trade to its wharves. The most comprehensive plan in the judgment of some of the authorities was the construction of what was known as the Back Cut Scheme, or, in other words, the conversion of the river with its "contracted and tortuous course" into a floating dock. That this was no new idea will be gathered from *Walker and Craddock's History of Wisbech*, which refers to the proposal of the Great Northern Railway in 1847 (mentioned in a previous chapter) to convert the river channel running through the town into docks, and to make a new straight cut from the South Brink Toll Bar of those days, opposite the North Brink Brewery, to the Horse Shoe Corner. This work remarks of the conflict between the Great Eastern and the Great Northern:—

Wisbech has no reason to fear that she will lose her docks and her new Cut. The feeling upon this Cut in the Admiralty is decided.

All their reports, private and public, have called for the suspension of railways or works which may interfere with its formation; and the Lords have withheld their necessary consent, until the new Cut is established. The Cut must come as the readiest work for improving the district; and docks will follow as an auxiliary of the Cut. It is only from the natural hatred that all men have at the disturbance of an old and venerated system, that Wisbech looks at present with aversion on Town Docks and the North Side Cut. Such weakness is neither very formidable nor very permanent.

The writers have not proved true prophets, for, at present, although several attempts have been made to advance such a scheme, there is no likelihood of its being undertaken, mainly because of its enormous cost. In 1873, Mr. Stockman, C.E., who had been concerned in the construction of the North Level Sluice, at Tydd St. Mary, submitted a scheme to the Wisbech Corporation for the construction of a dock and back cut at Wisbech, on similar lines to those proposed by previous engineers, and in October of that year, a public meeting, held under the presidency of the Mayor (Ald. Ford), approved of the proposal to provide docks for Wisbech, and referred Mr. Stockman's plans to the consideration of the Corporation. A committee of the Council was appointed to investigate the scheme, and in February, 1874, a deputation from the Corporation waited upon the Duke of Bedford to obtain his co-operation, but his Grace intimated that he should defer his decision until he had received the report of Sir John Coode, an engineer of eminence and experience in harbour works, in whose hands the matter had been placed. Mr. Stockman proposed a back cut or new channel from just below Redmoor sluice to the lower end of the Horse Shoe bend opposite Osborne House, two miles long and forty-four yards wide at high water level. The river course through the town was to be converted into a dock, entered by a lock at its seaward end, the sills of which would be at the same level as the North Level sluice, giving twenty-five feet of water at spring tides, and twenty-two feet at neap tides. The construction of three road and two railway bridges would be required. Later in the same year, the Corporation received another proposed scheme for the construction of a side dock at Wisbech in Eastfield, by Mr. George Usill, C.E., son of Mr. Harley Usill, a former member of the Corporation, and it was also made known that it was intended to apply to Parliament for powers to make a dock at Sutton Bridge. For the advancement of Mr. Usill's plan, a company was formed, and Mr. William Dawbarn presided over a meeting held on the 1st of November, 1874, at the Rose and Crown Hotel,

Wisbech, to promote the Port of Wisbech Dock and Railway Company, as it was denominated. A committee was appointed to canvass the town for shares, and arrangements were made for application to be made to Parliament for the necessary powers. Mr. Usill's plan proposed to make a new cut about forty-four yards wide, commencing at the Great Eastern Harbour Line on the east side, and terminating at the lower end of the Horse Shoe bend, a length of half-a-mile. This cut would have vertical walls of concrete giving 5,200 feet of quayage. A wharf of 150 feet wide was to be made parallel to the new cut, and to convert the old channel at the Horse Shoe bend, with adjacent land, into a floating dock of  $9\frac{1}{2}$  acres area. The entrance lock would have been in a direct line with the channel below.

In December, Mr. Wm. Dawbarn and Sir James Malcolm conferred with the Corporation upon the proposed scheme and that body adopted a resolution approving it, but declining, at that early stage, to affix their official seal to it. On the same day, the site of the proposed Sutton Bridge Dock was visited by the Wisbech promoters, who dined on their return with several members of the Council and other gentlemen, at the Rose and Crown Hotel. In January, 1875, the long-expected report of Sir John Coode, C.E., to the Duke of Bedford, was received in pamphlet form, and read to the Council in committee. It was afterwards made public, and was generally admitted to be a most able review and estimate of the difficulties attending the construction of a North Side Cut, with the proposed conversion of the existing channel into a dock. Sir John Coode's report embraced the whole tidal compartment of the Nene and the effect of Mr. Stockman's scheme upon all interests but especially upon the fresh water supply to the Thorney Lordship. The conclusions at which Sir John Coode arrived were as follows:—

1st.—That the free flow and ebb of the tidal water is greatly impeded in the Nene, and that the principal causes of the obstructions are—first, the winding channels and shoals at the entrance below Stone Ends, and secondly, the insufficient and tortuous waterway at and near Wisbech.

2nd.—That, in order to remove these impediments to the free passage of the tidal water and to establish the tidal economy of the river upon a satisfactory basis, it would be necessary to execute works of such an extensive character as would involve an expenditure considerably in excess of the sum which could be raised; and, having regard to the requirements of the locality, the benefits that would result from these improvements would not be commensurate with the outlay.

3rd.—That in the present condition of the river banks and channel, it would be inexpedient, if not dangerous, to construct the Sea Outfall which I have described until Walton Dam were removed, a new Back Cut formed, and the channel and banks generally regulated and strengthened.

4th.—That the maximum draught of vessels which can at present *safely* trade to Wisbech is from 14ft. to 15ft. at spring tides, and about 10ft. at neap tides.

5th.—That neither the project of Mr. Stockman nor that of Mr. Usill would provide for the passage of vessels of greater draught between the sea and the proposed dock than those at present frequenting Wisbech, and therefore, on this, as well as on other important grounds, I am unable to recommend either of their proposals for adoption.

6th.—That the best line for a Back Cut at Wisbech is practically that suggested by the late Mr. Robert Stephenson.

7th.—That in view of the increasing draught of vessels employed in the importation of timber, which is the chief trade of the district, a dock at Wisbech adapted to meet all reasonable requirements should, if carried out, be executed only in conjunction with such extensive river improvements as would enable vessels to be brought up drawing 15ft. at neap tides, and 21ft. at spring tides.

8th.—That a sufficient depth in the river channel to afford this amount of accommodation could only be obtained by the execution of the works referred to under the second head of this recapitulation, at a cost which would be altogether disproportionate to the benefits that would accrue from them.

9th.—That, notwithstanding the undoubted claims of Wisbech, provided the due requirements of trade could be met there, I am of opinion that the best site for a Dock on the Nene would be at some point not higher up than Sutton Bridge.

10th.—That the effect of any works of improvement in the Nene which have for their object the admission of a larger quantity of tidal water will prejudice the fresh water supply to Thorney, and under certain conditions to the Middle Level also. The works of river improvement which I consider should be executed in conjunction with a Dock at Wisbech, if carried out, would have this effect, and would necessitate the sinking of a deep boring into the "Cornbrash," or the adoption of other measures, involving heavy expenditure in first cost and annual maintenance, in order to provide a supply of fresh water to Thorney for *at least* six months in the year.

11th.—That the inconveniences which exist during dry seasons *under the present conditions* of the water supply to Thorney Lordship, may be mitigated by forming a collecting tank in the sand and shingle bed underlying the south-west corner of the estate, and by pumping therefrom for distribution in the existing water channels. These operations would also involve a not inconsiderable expense in first cost and annual maintenance.

12th.—That it is highly desirable that the sewage of Peterborough should forthwith be diverted from the Nene.

13th.—That, in the present condition of the river channel and outfall, it is worthy of consideration whether it might not be expedient to embank the wash lands to such a limited height as would suffice to protect them from high tides and summer floods.

14th.—That the sluice and lock at Dog-in-a-Doublet should be renewed next year.

15th.—That it appears desirable to form one general Conservancy, having control over the whole tidal compartment of the Nene.

Sir John Coode estimated that the cost of Mr. Stockman's scheme would be £216,000, and of Mr. Usill's £210,000 to £268,000, according to the materials used. The judgment upon Mr. Stockman's scheme had been in suspense, but it was now felt that Sir John Coode's opinion being adverse to its adoption, the only course open to obtain floating water at Wisbech, was to assist the company, with Mr. William Dawbarn at its head, which was promoting Mr. Usill's scheme. The Council called a meeting of the inhabitants, at which it was resolved to strenuously oppose the Sutton Bridge proposals, but the suggested friendly opposition to the Wisbech Company's scheme, was, after the meeting had been adjourned for a week, negatived by the vote of the ratepayers. In April, 1875, the Wisbech and Sutton Bridge Dock Bills came before the House of Lords, as competing schemes, the late Mr. Bidder opening the case for the Sutton Bridge Bill, of which Mr. George Frederick Young was the promoter, and calling Mr. H. H. English, Mr. Prest, Mr. Brunlees, the engineer, Sir John Coode, C.E., and Mr. H. Oakley, of the Great Northern Railway, in its support. On the third day, Mr. Venables presented the case for the Wisbech Dock Company's Bill, and called Ald. Ford, Mr. Geo. Dawbarn, Mr. G. Usill, the engineer, Mr. Abernethy, C.E., Mr. Allport, of the Midland Railway, Mr. Waring and others. The issue turned mainly upon the engineering details, and in this respect, the Wisbech Bill failed to satisfy the committee, who threw the Usill scheme out, and subsequently declared the preamble of the Sutton Bridge Bill proved. It was understood that the cost of promoting the Wisbech project, borne by Mr. Wm. Dawbarn, amounted to about £1,200. This reverse was a great disappointment to the Wisbech Corporation, for although there were points in the proposal to construct a side dock, which were undoubtedly unsatisfactory, it was hoped that if powers could have been obtained, a practicable plan could have been evolved with the aid of an eminent consulting engineer upon very similar lines. Now, it seemed that Wisbech must undergo decay, and Sutton Bridge become the port of the future, for although Sutton Bridge

is included in the port of Wisbech, it was felt that the Sutton Bridge Dock promoters might ultimately petition for separation from the upper port. The future was, consequently, regarded with, perhaps, greater despondency than the circumstances justified, and, in course of time, these fears proved quite illusory, though in a most unexpected and unfortunate manner. The Wisbech Corporation voted their thanks to Mr. William Dawbarn for his efforts to obtain Parliamentary powers, and resolved to oppose the Sutton Bridge Bill in its passage through the House of Commons. The resistance was futile, for in July, 1875, the House of Commons' Committee passed the preamble, and in August, the Royal Assent was given to the measure. A few days later, a complimentary dinner was given to Mr. G. F. Young, the promoter, and almost simultaneously, the Corporation not to be beaten, engaged Mr. Abernethy, C.E., to prepare another plan for docks at Wisbech.

In November, 1876, a public meeting was held at Wisbech to consider the desirability of promoting a Dock Bill in Parliament, and a majority voting for it, a poll was demanded by Mr. A. W. English. The poll took place on the 2nd of December, and resulted as follows:—For a Dock Bill, 1,916; against, 251; majority for the Bill, 1,665. The Bill was consequently proceeded with, and came before the House of Lords' committee in March, 1877. The witnesses examined included Messrs. Geo. Dawbarn, F. Ford, G. Hiscox, J. Hampson, Capt. Nicholls, W. Wilson, J. Abernethy, C.E., Capt. Calver, E. Easton, C.E., J. H. Wheeler, C.E., and Capt. Wood. The opponents to the Bill called Messrs. J. Hawksley, C. E. Watson, Shelford, Airey, E. H. Jackson, J. Lawrence, Addy, and H. H. English. After a hearing extending over five days, during which the greatest interest in the proceedings and in the reports in the special daily issues of the *Advertiser* was evinced, the preamble was declared not proved and the Bill was lost. In the following June, a deputation from the Wisbech Corporation waited upon the Duke of Bedford, with reference to a scheme for river improvement, but nothing came from it, and on April 10th, 1878, the first pile of the Sutton Bridge Dock was driven. Three years later, on May 14th, 1881, the dock was opened, with some ceremony and rejoicings, by the entry of the *Garland*, a ship belonging to Mr. H. H. English, who, with the Great Northern Railway, were the chief shareholders. A service was read by the Rev. H. T. Fountaine on board the vessel, which was decorated with flags, but the intended public demonstration was deferred until the following June. The formal opening, that was intended to have



been, never took place. Just a month after, and on the day following that on which the *Garland* passed safely out of the dock into the river, indications were observed of a serious subsidence of land on each side of the entrance lock, and the undermining of the dock walls. Two or three days later, the concrete slope of the western side of the dock gave way, and in spite of the advice and efforts of Mr. Brunlees, C.E., the engineer, Sir John Coode, C.E., Mr. Fowler, C.E., and Mr. Johnson, C.E., who were hastily summoned in consultation, as well as the employment of divers to ascertain the cause of the disaster, from that day to the present time, it has remained unrestored and useless. A Bill is being promoted in the present session of Parliament (1896) to raise capital for the purpose of restoring the dock, such a work necessarily involving a considerable outlay. The failure of the dock, just when a bright future was anticipated for it, caused much excitement and regret in the district. Even at Wisbech, where it was regarded as a competing scheme that might eventually have been injurious, sympathy was very widely expressed with the promoters at the unhappy issue of their efforts and the sinking of their capital. The treacherous nature of the soil, and an insufficient appreciation of the difficulties it presented, were considered to be the main causes of the failure of the dock. Mr. English had acquired a large area of land in the neighbourhood of the dock, and houses were being rapidly built by speculators in anticipation of Sutton Bridge becoming a busy port, but the disaster completely dashed their hopes and brought disappointment and loss upon those who had naturally anticipated a considerable increase of population, if the dock had proved a successful undertaking.

With reference to the failure of this enterprise, Mr. J. T. Marshall writes as follows:—"It may seem strange, but concrete ruined Sutton Bridge dock. The engineer had planned the dock without a pile, but stipulated for eight feet of concrete under the lock. In order to get that eight feet of concrete in, the contractor had to take out eight feet of sand—quick-sand—and for that purpose used sheet piling to keep the sand from oozing into his excavation. But the piling was neither water tight nor sand tight, consequently thousands of tons of both, found their way through the sides into the works and were pumped out by the engines. The consequence was that when the work was supposed to be completed, there is but little doubt that the sides of the lock, in consequence of the character of the soil, were hollow, so much so that the workmen said 'a waggon and

horses might almost be driven through them.' Some engineers and especially local ones, knowing the soil, would, instead of the eight feet of concrete, have kept the sand in its place by substituting piling and planking, as it is known that no better foundation is required than sand, *if held in its place*, some preferring it to certain kinds of clay, especially those of a soft and yielding nature. A previous instance of a similar failure, in which a London engineer was concerned, was experienced in the Lutton Leam sluice of 1805, to celebrate the completion of which a supper was given at the Cross Keys' Inn, Sutton Wash (now the Bridge Hotel, Sutton Bridge). The very next morning, the sluice was gone! The one of 1806, which is still standing, was planned by Mr. Thos. Pear, of Spalding, a local man."

On October 28th, 1882, the highest tide recorded up to that time in the Nene was registered by the tide gauge. It reached 43 feet 9 inches above the Nene Valley datum, which datum is 20 feet below the cill of the North Level sluice of 1830, and 25·84 feet below Ordnance datum. The Nene overflowed its banks at Wisbech between Osborne Road, leading to Mount Pleasant Bank and Henson's Dockyard, now the swinging berth. A considerable amount of damage was caused by this tide to the east bank of the river, which was then under the jurisdiction of the Court of Sewers. Apprehension was felt lest the Albion Inn should be undermined, and extensive injury was done to the Eastfield Bank, its condition appearing so precarious, that considerable anxiety was felt for the safety of the district protected by it. A meeting of landowners was held at the Sessions House, when Mr. Arthur W. English, the chairman, and a committee, were appointed to confer with the Court of Sewers. The result of the conference was that the Court assured the committee that active steps should be taken to secure the bank. Mr. Wheeler, C.E., of Boston, was called in and submitted plans and estimates for permanent strengthening works, but after the Court of Sewers, the Wisbech Corporation, and the Eastfield owners had discussed the matter, the Court of Sewers came to the conclusion that the bank was sufficiently secure for the purposes of the protection of the district, and that it did not propose to undertake any works in addition to the repairs that they had made immediately after the high tide. The Corporation, however, met and resolved, in consequence of the decision of the Court of Sewers, to consult Mr. Abernethy, C.E., as to the condition of the bank and the construction of a wharf, the latter to be used for the discharge of vessels' cargoes. On March 11th,

1883, a further high tide occurred, exceeding that of the previous October, and reaching to a greater height by four inches, viz., 44 feet 1 inch. This caused further serious damage to the Eastfield bank, and necessitated the stoppage of the roadway for vehicular traffic, the edges of the bank having caved in. Several parts of the town were flooded by this remarkable tide, and in the neighbourhood of Lynn Road and Monica Road, the water topped the bank of the entrance to the Canal (between the river and the sluice), deluging the basements of the houses in Britannia Terrace almost to the ceilings. This was on Sunday evening about eight o'clock, and some of the congregation, dispersing from St. Augustine's church, and other places of worship, found difficulty in reaching their homes, the road being covered with water, knee deep at the sides. In the emergency, a manual fire engine was employed during the night and the next day in pumping the water from the underground kitchens into the drains. The Court of Sewers now proposed to levy a contribution of £80 per acre on the Eastfield district, to carry out works for ensuring the stability of the bank, but the landowners negatived this confiscatory proposal and matters remained at a deadlock.

In August, 1883, the plan of Mr. Abernethy, C.E., for a dock was forthcoming, and was submitted to the Corporation, a six-acre dock being estimated to cost £143,000, and a ten-acre dock, £188,000. The entrance to this dock was intended to have been at Mr. Henson's slipway, and the dock and quays in Crab Marsh, occupying with the additional land required for warehouses and railways, about 65 acres, which extended to the road known as Middle Drove, adjoining the Mount Pleasant burial ground. The failure of the Sutton Bridge dock, and the supposed indisposition of the Great Northern Railway to invest capital in its restoration, naturally influenced the Wisbech authorities in endeavouring to turn to account the disastrous turn of events. In September, the Corporation once more determined to promote a Bill in Parliament for the construction of Mr. Abernethy's dock and railways. A section of landowners and ratepayers opposed the project, and at a public meeting held on September 28th, 1883, under the presidency of the Mayor (Mr. W. M. Rust), a resolution was proposed from the chair, and seconded by Mr. George Dawbarn, authorising the Corporation to obtain Parliamentary powers to carry out the scheme, which, it was intimated, was likely to involve the town in a half-crown rate. A show of hands was taken, and there was a large majority in favour of the Corporation Bill, but a poll was demanded. The voting-papers were

distributed on the 18th October and collected on the 22nd, the result being declared on the 23rd—five days after the laying of the foundation stone of the Bentinck Dock, at King's Lynn—and was as follows :—

						Owners.		Ratepayers.	
For the Dock Resolution	...	...	...	...	...	153	—	1212	— 1365
Against	...	...	...	...	...	0	—	215	— 215
Majority of Owners and Ratepayers for Dock						...	...	...	1150

The fact that there were no owners voting against the resolution arose from their claims to vote not having been sent in within the time defined in the notice of the poll.

In the meantime, great efforts were being made by Mr. Geo. Dawbarn and one or two other members of the Corporation to induce the Government to seriously advance through Parliament a Rivers' Conservancy Bill, with a view to the substitution of one comprehensive body of Conservators in the case of each river and watershed, for the numerous conflicting navigation and drainage authorities controlling such rivers as the Nene or Ouse. But little progress, however, could be made in this direction and in April, 1884, the Corporation concentrated its efforts upon the passage of the Wisbech Dock and Railways Bill. Mr. Blennerhassett, M.P., was the chairman of the committee of the House of Commons before which it was heard, the witnesses called for the Bill included the Mayor (Mr. W. M. Rust), Ald. Stanley, Messrs. J. Birt, T. Patrick, J. W. Hiscox, T. G. Beatley, W. H. Wheeler, C.E., Geo. Dawbarn, W. Nicholls, H. Pooley, Alfred Giles, M.P., Mr. Abernethy, and the Town Clerk. The opponents of the Bill called Mr. Percival, Capt. Ingram, Messrs. Brunlees, C.E., H. H. English, Laws, W. Upward, W. Layle, H. Sharpe, and A. W. English. After a five days' hearing, the preamble of the Bill was declared to be not proved. At a subsequent meeting, the cost of promoting this Bill in Parliament was stated to have been £2,500. The failure of the third attempt to obtain Parliamentary powers for the construction of a dock was a well-nigh crushing disappointment to the Corporation, and thoroughly disheartened their efforts to obtain better accommodation, the question remaining quiescent for four years. The Eastfield owners and ratepayers in March, 1884, held a meeting disapproving of the action of the Court of Sewers in levying a rate on the poor rate assessment, instead of an acreage tax, which had been the practice adopted previously, whilst

dikereeves were appointed to represent them and to act with the Court of Sewers in any necessary works. This Eastfield district comprises an area of about eighty acres only,\* and the responsibility of the Court of Sewers was limited, according to their own contention, to the maintenance of a sufficient bank to protect the district from tidal waters. The wharfage and roadway were consequently suffered to fall into decay, the onus being cast upon the Corporation to repair them. This dual ownership was found to be productive of undesirable friction between those bodies, and attempts were made in May, 1888, to arrive at an equitable compromise. The dikereeves convened a meeting of owners of the district, and obtained their approval of a resolution agreeing to contribute a sum not exceeding £150 annually, in consideration of the future maintenance of the bank being vested in the Corporation. This undertaking was subsequently revised and a still more favourable offer made to the Corporation, the Eastfield district pledging itself to contribute £200 annually in perpetuity, instead of £150, a proposal which was afterwards sanctioned by the Act of 1889. The Wisbech merchants also met and agreed to pay 2d. per load for additional wharfage accommodation, which, if calculated upon the average tonnage of the previous three years would realize about £300 per annum. The sum of £450 might thus be applicable to the payment of interest upon capital to be expended by the Corporation, in extending the wharfage as far as Henson's dockyard, now the swinging berth. The Eastfield bank would, by this means, it was urged, be secured against high tides, better wharfing accommodation would be provided for large steamers, and the harbour branch of the Great Eastern Railway be extended at a total cost, estimated in the first instance at from £10,000 to £15,000. This would involve, with the sources of income referred to, and a proposed reduction of the interest payable on the Corporation debt, a rate of not more than 3d. in the £. Mr. W. H. Thomas, C.E., of Westminster, was commissioned to prepare plans and Parliamentary powers were to be applied for, not only to carry out these works, but to create Debenture Stock, in order to pay off the existing mortgage debts to the amount of about £40,000, which were

\* The actual area was stated to be 79 acres, representing an assessment of £3,565 vested in about 24 owners, of whom the largest were:—The Board of Guardians, £400; Messrs. English Bros., £373; Great Eastern Railway, £321; Wisbech Lighting Company, £290; Mr. Richard Young's Trustees, £130; Messrs. Hiscox and Smith, £137; and Mr. G. W. Mills, £125.

secured upon the Corporate estates. The Corporation was paying  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. upon these loans, and it was anticipated from the experience of other boroughs, that a lower rate would be obtainable. But the proposals were by no means unanimously received. The first Council meeting on July 30th, 1888, declined to approve the new River Improvement Scheme by a sufficient majority. At a subsequent meeting held in the following month, some alterations were made and the scheme was then carried unanimously. The meeting of ratepayers also evinced strong opposition, and at an adjourned meeting the scheme was rejected, notwithstanding that the motion was proposed by the Mayor (Mr. J. T. Hiscox). Mr. Peatling demanded a poll, which resulted in a narrow majority, the figures being as follow :—

					Owners.	Ratepayers.			
In favour of Bill	...	...	...	...	128	—	586	—	714
Against ...	...	...	...	...	46	—	583	—	629
									<hr/>
									85
									<hr/>
Neutral	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	582
Spoilt ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	40

It will be observed that 622 papers were either unused or spoilt, 1,343 out of about 2,100 recording their votes.

In the following year (1889) during Mr. Goward's mayoralty, the Bill passed through Parliament as an unopposed measure, clauses proposed by the Commissioners of Sewers and the Nene Outfall Commissioners having been agreed to. The House of Lords' Committee raised an objection to the Corporation constructing a railway, and an agreement was arrived at with the Great Eastern Railway Company to make it, the land being purchased by the Corporation, and an adequate yearly sum by way of compensation for the user by the Company to be paid to the Corporation. The Wisbech Corporation Act, 1889, received the Royal Assent on August 12th of that year, and on the 19th, the Parliamentary Committee of the Corporation presented its report to the Council. After discussion, it was adopted, and a vote of thanks passed to Mr. Hiscox for the trouble he had taken in obtaining Parliamentary powers. The appointment of Mr. W. H. Thomas, C.E., as engineer of the works, was made, and in November, the tender of Mr. John Band, of Sunderland, for £12,806, uncreosoted wood to be used (£14,023 if creosoted wood) was ultimately accepted, an animated debate taking place on the question of whether creosoted or uncreosoted wood should

be employed by the contractor. By a majority of one vote only, nine against eight, the motion was adopted that uncreosoted wood be used, thus reducing the cost by £1,217. On New Year's day of the year 1890, the works were commenced, and a few weeks later it was reported that the cost of obtaining the Act had been £1,863. A fierce controversy arose over the question of providing openings in the quay for the landing of timber cargoes at low water from small vessels or lighters, and the ratepayers, in public meeting, protested against such a break being made in the continuity of the wharf. Ultimately it was decided to complete the contract, before deciding upon their construction. At the end of the first twelve months, the engineer reported that the works had, thus far, cost £14,700, including £500 extras, and when in March, 1891, a portion of the works collapsed, thirty yards of quay falling into the river, consternation began to be felt as to the expenditure the River Improvement Scheme would involve. The pressure on the land side caused several piles to snap off, and the engineer reported that owing to the wet soil dredged from the river being placed behind the piles, the great weight had broken seven main piles and displaced others, so that some of the work would have to be reconstructed. The Corporation was hastily summoned, and Mr. Wilson, the engineer of the Great Eastern Railway Company, was called in to consult with Mr. Thomas, C.E. Mr. Wilson advised the strengthening of the existing piles for a distance of 750 feet by doubling them, and this was, on the 21st of March, 1891, ordered to be done, at an anticipated cost of £3,000. But on April 4th, the Corporation issued instructions for the whole of the works to be stopped, and Mr. J. Abernethy, the engineer of the dock which was rejected by Parliament in 1883, was appointed consulting engineer. Mr. Abernethy reported other indications of failure, beside the breaches in the quay, and recommended the strengthening of the works throughout. He advised that 500 feet should be first constructed to test its efficiency. The strengthening works were estimated to cost £5,840 and were ordered to be done. The Corporation, for these additional works, raised a loan of £10,000, after an enquiry had been held by the Local Government Board and its sanction had been obtained. Again the works showed further signs of weakness, this time in the portion overlapping the old quay in front of the offices of Mr. J. T. Hiscox, now Messrs. Ropkins and Co., and the Corporation in December, 1891, applied to the engineers to know when the works would be completed, the time arranged in the contract

having been exceeded. In January, 1892, the Corporation resolved, after a conference with Mr. Abernethy, to complete the works under its own supervision. This procedure was followed by a claim of £9,600 from Mr. Band, the contractor, as compensation for stopping the works, and for work done exceeding the agreement. By the terms of the contract it was found, to the surprise of the ratepayers, that the engineer was appointed the arbitrator in case of any dispute arising. About four months after, the award was received from Mr. Thomas, which allowed the contractor £3,218, no part of the Corporation counter claim of £10,710 being allowed, and adjudged that the costs, amounting to upwards of £500, be paid by the Corporation immediately, or interest at five per cent. to be charged! The position in which the Corporation found itself by this procedure was very galling, and although there were emphatic complaints by the ratepayers of the injustice of making the engineer, with whom they were at issue, the arbitrator, there was no appeal under the contract from his decision, without incurring heavy costs. The Corporation consequently paid the amount of the award. But even then, the works had yet to be finished, and in November, 1892, when the merchants intimated that they declined to pay the wharfage dues of 2d. per load, until the works were completed, further litigation seemed possible. The difficulty as to the recesses had been overcome, and a limited number had been constructed, nevertheless the merchants alleged that until vessels could lie and discharge their cargoes alongside the quay they were not liable. Matters remained in this unsatisfactory position until March, 1894, when the merchants suggested an abatement of the dues, but this was resisted, and the Corporation having decided to press its claims, the deadlock came to an end in August of the same year, by the merchants complying with the demands of the collector. The works may be said to have extended over a period of from four to five years, and to have cost from £28,000 to £30,000, inclusive of the purchase of houses and land. A portion of the land acquired, adjoining Bannister's Row, it is proposed to let for wharfage purposes as soon as the Great Eastern Railway Company has declared its requirements for the extended harbour line.

During the progress of these works, the tenders for the Wisbech Borough Redeemable Debenture Stock, under the Wisbech Corporation Act, 1889, amounting to £105,000 at 3½ per cent., were received, and £21,460 more than was available was applied for, at prices ranging from £99 to £101 10s., the



average being £99 3s. 8d. The last quotation of the Wisbech Stock was about £116. The conversion from a  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. loan to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. stock has been the means of effecting an appreciable saving in the finances of the Corporation, lessening in some measure, the rates in aid necessitated by the River Improvement expenditure.

The class of vessels trading to the port has undergone a remarkable change during late years, and in place of sailing vessels and the smaller craft, large steamers, drawing from 15 feet to 17 feet of water, with a net tonnage of 700 to 800 tons and from 200 to 245 feet in length, have been brought up the channel, as will be seen from the following particulars of the larger vessels which have discharged their cargoes at Wisbech :—

Year.	Name.	Length.		Gross Tonn.		Net Tonn.	Draught.
1888	Abertay	221 feet	...	1052	...	656	15 feet.
1891	Lindisfarne	245 feet	...	1151	...	724	17 feet.
1893	Vivienne	239 feet	...	1230	...	787	16 feet.
1893	Nevada	230 feet	...	1285	...	794	15 feet.
1893	Ivy	230 feet	...	1246	...	781	15 feet.
1893	Denaby	225 feet	...	1150	...	709	15 feet.
1894	Baltimore	229 feet	...	1272	...	783	15 feet.
1894	Eastern Star	230 feet	...	1158	...	722	16 feet.
1894	Primula	230 feet	...	1152	...	744	16 feet.
1894	Cette	235 feet	...	1005	...	750	17 feet.
1895	Ella	218 feet	...	1122	...	702	15 feet.
1895	Thos. Haynes	222 feet	...	1227	...	776	17 feet.
1895	Rondo	225 feet	...	1199	...	744	16 feet.
1895	Saltburn	230 feet	...	1288	...	837	18 feet.
1895	Middlesboro'	240 feet	...	1278	...	821	16 feet.
1895	Greyfriars	240 feet	...	1285	...	794	14 feet.

The gross tonnage is the actual measurement and capacity of shell or all closed-in spaces, without any deductions for propelling power, cabins, rooms, &c. Net tonnage is the capacity of the vessel when these deductions are made.

An important question affecting the interests of the port at Wisbech and Sutton Bridge was argued in the Admiralty Court of the High Court of Justice, in March, 1895, before Mr. Justice Bruce and two Trinity Masters. The owners of the s.s. Burlington (Messrs. Thompson, Elliott and Co., Newcastle), brought an action for £375, damages alleged to have been sustained to that vessel whilst lying in a berth at Sutton Bridge, in August, 1894, for the purpose of discharging a cargo of wood for Smith's Timber Company. The plaintiffs contended that the Wisbech Corporation, as the Harbour Authority, had neglected to keep the berth



**TIMBER-LADEN STEAMERS DISCHARGING AT THE NEW QUAY, WISBECH.**  
*From Photo by Poulton & Son.*



**THE WHARVES, SHOWING BALTIC STEAMERS.**  
*From Photo by Poulton & Son.*

**THE PORT OF WISBECH.**

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TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

at Sutton Bridge in an even and proper condition, by permitting large stones to remain in the sand, causing extensive damage to the plates when the vessel settled at the fall of the tide. The Burlington, it was also asserted, was put on this particular berth by order of the Lower Harbour Master (Mr. G. Hoole), although she might have been berthed at another place. The defendants denied that the damage was sustained at Sutton Bridge, and alternately pleaded that if any damage was done, it was owing to the unfit structure and condition of the steamer, and to negligence in overloading the vessel on deck, causing a strong list to port, through which she grounded on her bilge instead of the keel. Mr. J. P. Aspinall and Mr. B. Aspinall appeared for the plaintiffs, and Sir Walter Phillimore and Mr. T. E. Scrutton for defendants. The litigation was of a protracted nature, and up to April 8th, had occupied the Court during the whole or part of eight days. An adjournment over the Easter recess was necessary, and the completion of the case extended over several additional days. The plaintiffs' witnesses, consisting of the master, mate and seamen, supported the contention that the vessel, after being ordered to the berth by the Harbour Master, grounded on a hard bottom, and on leaving port was found to be leaking. Expert witnesses described damages consistent with a vessel settling upon stones, and a diver deposed to finding such stones. The banks being repaired by the Nene Outfall Commissioners with large stones and faggots, the suggestion was made that these stones had slipped into the river (vacant spots in the bank being noticed), and the Corporation, through their officials, had neglected to remove them. Considerable evidence was adduced of surveys made of the berth after the Burlington had left, pointing to the existence of stones. In cross-examination it was elicited that the vessel had grounded several times previously, once on the bar at Bilboa. On behalf of the Corporation, it was asserted that by reason of an abnormal deck cargo, the vessel listed (plaintiffs' witnesses admitting the list) and so she could not take the ground properly. Shipping experts, marine surveyors, and a diver deposed that there were no stones in the berth, there being a quick-sand bottom. Other witnesses said that several steamers had just previously laid in the berth without sustaining damage, and it was further shown that the consignees of the cargo, through the Harbour Master, gave the order for the berthing of the steamer. The legal arguments occupied two days, and for the defence two points were put before the court, one upon facts, and the other on a point of law as to liability and jurisdiction over

this particular part of the Nene, which is known as the Nene Outfall Cut, and is vested in the Nene Outfall Commissioners, the Corporation having no power to touch the foreshore or banks. Judgment was reserved and delivered on May 8th, in favour of plaintiffs, with costs. Mr. Justice Bruce held that the bottom was not in a fit and proper condition for vessels of this size to be berthed upon, and that the nature of the injuries fitted in with the facts. He accounted for the presence of stones by their slipping (1) from the bank, for it was obvious when there was a strong tide the tendency would be for the stones to be washed away; (2) on the question of liability, the Judge said although the Cut was vested in the Outfall Commissioners, it was part of the Harbour of Wisbech; the defendants were the Harbour Authority and took the tolls, which imposed upon them the duty of giving warning to vessels entering the harbour of any danger calculated to injure them. The Harbour Master had assured the Captain that the berth was a good and safe one, and was acting within the scope of his authority when he directed the vessel to the berth. It was his duty to have ascertained the nature of the berth, no soundings had been recently taken, and the Corporation could not claim protection on the ground of their ignorance of facts, which resulted solely from their own neglect. Upon the recommendation of counsel, the Corporation decided to appeal upon the point of law as to jurisdiction and liability, and it came before the Appeal Court on July 18th, 1895, the appeal being dismissed with costs against the Corporation.

On August 13th, 1895, a statement was made to the Town Council by the Mayor (Mr. A. W. May), with regard to the river, being the result of investigations which he had made with the co-operation and assistance of Messrs. W. F. Bray and W. Bruce. From returns supplied by the timber merchants, or obtained from the Customs House, together with the assistance of the rate books and other information, an attempt was made to establish reliable data, to decide the question whether or not the river and its trade really was a benefit to the town. Taking the port at both Wisbech and Sutton Bridge, the estimate was that there were employed 794 men, representing an aggregate of 3,176 souls, although it was pointed out that many of these persons lived at Sutton Bridge, and at Walsoken, Leverington, &c. These people received in pay £31,365 per annum, and inhabited 565 houses (including those of partners of firms, clerks, &c.) which were of the rateable value of £3,755, and paid £1,672 in rates, a portion of which did not go to the borough. The expenditure on

the port in the three previous years, described as expensive years, exclusive of anything spent on permanent works on the quay, was £1,648, or less than the river interest paid in rates to what was termed the competing area in relation to other ports. The contention made was that although the river might be an annual loss, it was an important factor in the prosperity of the district, and upon the increase or decrease of the trade depended the lowering or raising of the rates.

Earlier in this chapter, it has been mentioned that a Bill was being promoted in the present session of Parliament (1896) to raise capital for the purpose of restoring Sutton Bridge Dock and it has since passed through Parliament as an unopposed measure. By this Act, the time for construction, restoration or completion of the Dock, Railway and other works is extended, and powers given for the raising of additional capital. The original construction of the Dock occupied  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years, from the cutting of the first sod in January, 1878, to its completion by the contractors, Messrs. Benton and Woodwiss, of Derby, in July, 1881. To the end of 1894, the total amount expended on the Dock was £170,000, of which £132,040 was share capital, and £37,700 loans. The principal shareholders are Mr. H. H. English, of Westwood House, Peterborough, the Great Northern Railway Company, and the representatives of the contractors (Messrs. Benton and Woodwiss). Mr. H. H. English is chairman, and Mr. R. G. Thorold, the secretary of the company. It is now proposed by the engineer of these restoration works, Mr. A. H. Tyler, C.E., to construct a clay core across the lock, about 300 feet in length, and carried to a depth of 25 feet below the level of the lock-pit. This core or diaphragm is intended to stop the percolation and the flowing backward and forward of the water, which originally set the quick-silt in motion, and was the cause of the disaster. The dock gates and lock-pit will be repaired, and the area of the dock cleared from accumulations. The improvements which have been effected in the machinery required for excavation reduce very considerably the cost of this work, compared with that in the original contract. The sides of the Dock will be left at their natural slope except in such places as a vertical quay may be required, when a timber staging will be made. The estimated cost of the works is about £25,000, including the cost of restoration of the hydraulic machinery, and other appliances necessary for the equipment of a dock. This expenditure will be paid in shares which are to rank before the existing Debentures and Preference Stock.

In the event of the Dock being successfully re-constructed on these lines, it is believed that a considerable addition to the shipping trade of the Nene would result, the Dock being favourably situated for communications with the Midland Counties. Any augmentation of the income arising from port dues would also benefit Wisbech, Sutton Bridge being comprised in that port, and not only the shareholders of the Company, but the town of Wisbech would welcome the resuscitation of an undertaking, which has been, unfortunately, useless and unprofitable for a period of fifteen years.

In a former chapter, reference was made to the construction of a new bridge, which has been erected over the Nene at Sutton Bridge. Through the courtesy of the engineer, Mr. McDonald, of Derby, and the kind assistance of the resident engineer, Mr. John Briggs, some interesting details have been supplied as to the construction of this costly and substantial engineering work. The history of the bridges, preceding this one, will be found earlier in this volume,\* and need not be repeated. For some time the old and new bridges stood side by side, separated by a space of little more than a hundred feet. The old one had been in existence for nearly half-a-century, having been built in 1850. In 1866, it was purchased jointly by the Midland and Great Northern Railway Companies, when it was adapted to railway traffic as well as for the use of vehicles and passengers. A toll was charged to those who made use of the roadway, with certain exceptions in favour of residents. This toll was felt to be a great inconvenience to the public, and repeated steps were taken to get the bridge made free. When County Councils came into operation, consequent upon the passing of the Local Government Act in 1894, there appeared to be some hopes that the desire of the inhabitants would be realized. The railway companies offered to facilitate the freeing of the bridge by abolishing the tolls, on the condition that they were relieved of the cost of maintenance of the road which constituted the approach to it, but up to the present, the two County Councils concerned—those of Norfolk and South Holland (Lincs.) have not seen their way to accept the conditions offered. In 1892, powers were obtained by the railway companies, in view of increased traffic, to construct a new bridge, and in February, 1894, the contract of Messrs. Andrew Handyside and Co., Britannia Ironworks, Derby, for its erection, was accepted. The bridge had to be of necessity like the old one, an opening one, in order

\* Chapter VII., pages 104-106.

to allow of the passage of vessels proceeding to Wisbech. It consists of three spans, viz., two land spans 71 feet and 47 feet respectively in length, and a swing span 165 feet 6 inches in length. The bridge rests upon three piers, described as the pivot, nose, and east piers. They are constructed of cast-iron cylinders 10 feet in diameter at the base, and tapering at the bed of the river to six feet in diameter. There are 17 cylinders in all, nine in the pivot pier, and four each in the nose and east piers. These are resting on a bed of hard grey clay, at a depth of 56 feet below ordnance datum, or about 21 feet below the bed of the river at mid-channel. About four feet below the river bed, sea-sand and shells were met with; then followed a bed of peat twelve inches thick. Two beds of blue clay were passed through, each about four feet in thickness, also several thin beds of differently coloured sand, and about 53 feet below ordnance datum, a bed of ballast mixed with large flint stones was met with, and immediately below this came the Kimmeridge clay. Although borings were carried still further, the clay was found to continue. In the course of the excavations a number of relics of bye-gone times were unearthed. These included a flint of the neolithic or second stone age, the astragalus or anklebone of the extinct ox (*bos primigenus*), the femur or thigh bone of the red deer (*cervus*), and a rib bone of some animal which had been plainly worked upon by man. All these were found practically together and belonged to pre-historic times. It was stated by an eminent Cambridge University expert who visited the spot that this bed of clay upon which the foundation of the bridge rests was probably eight hundred feet in thickness, and it will therefore be seen that the foundations of the new bridge are exceptionally secure and stable. The cylinders were sunk under air pressure, the workmen obtaining access by passing through air locks. All the men employed upon this particular portion of the work had to be especially selected, as working under the conditions required was very trying to all but strong men. The electric light was used for providing illumination for the men whilst at work in the cylinders, there being four lights of 32 candle power in each. The method employed was to excavate the earth at the bottom of each cylinder, and it was carried up by means of a steam winch through the air lock and tipped from the top of the cylinder. The air forced in kept the water out at the bottom, and heavy weights placed at the apex of the cylinders caused them to gradually settle down as the excavations proceeded, and as operations went on, pieces were bolted



on to the tops in such lengths as sufficed to keep the head above water level but did not render it top heavy. After the requisite depth had been reached, they were filled with concrete, which was sent down in a wet state and spread out by the men at the bottom. When a sufficient quantity of this material had been placed in each cylinder, the remainder was filled with radiating brickwork. All round the sides of the interior of each cylinder, felt was packed, to allow of any expansion of the material put in. When each cylinder had been completely filled with the brickwork upon the top of the concrete, a large circular granite stone was placed on the top, to receive the distributing girders, so that practically the weight of the bridge does not rest upon the iron cylinders, but upon the brickwork and concrete, the latter being firmly embedded in and resting securely upon the excellent foundation provided by the Kimmeridge clay. Besides this, the cylinders constituting each pier are firmly braced together with channel iron bracing. The new bridge is divided into two parts, one half being reserved for railway and the other for road traffic, each part having a clear width of 15 feet. A parapet upon the division between the two parts of the bridge serves as a screen, so that horses, &c., crossing cannot see the trains as they pass. The land spans consist of one centre and two outside steel plate girders, with cross girders. Upon the railway side of the bridge are fixed two girders, known as rail bearers, placed exactly underneath where the rails will be laid, so that they take the weight, which by means of the cross girders rivetted to the main girders, is effectually distributed. An iron floor is fixed on the railway side, with longitudinal timbers to carry the rails, and the road part is planked and asphalted. The swinging portion of the bridge consists of one centre and two outside double lattice steel girders (with overhead bracing), cross girders, and rail bearers. The nine cylinders of the "pivot" are strongly braced together and above is placed the roller pathway. There are 36 rollers, two feet six inches in diameter, attached by spokes to the pivot proper. The roller path is of cast iron, faced with steel. The rollers are of cast steel, with gun metal "bushes," and owing to the small radius in which they turn, have to be at an incline, and the pathway above and below had to be built with a corresponding slope. The bridge is turned by means of a shaft fixed at one point of the swinging portion. The weight of the bridge to be swung is about 750 tons or double that of the old bridge. A water-tight iron casing is placed round the pivot pier to

protect the rollers, &c., at high tide. A timber fender is constructed round the pivot and nose piers to protect the cylinders whilst vessels are passing through the bridge. The piles are of pitch pine, no less than 16 inches square, some of them being sixty feet long before they were driven; they go twenty feet into the bed of the river, and are firmly strutted and braced together. The fender of the pivot pier served for the purposes of a platform on which to build the swing portion, which was, after erection, moved into position. The abutments are a special feature of the bridge, being built upon piles. These piles are 12 inches square, and first of all, an excavation was made 20 feet below the ground level. The piles were then driven in another 20 feet below this level, sawn off, and a cill placed on the top, with two thicknesses of three inch planking, forming a platform. Upon this was formed a bed of concrete five feet thick, and on that foundation the brick abutments rest. The result is that the abutments are upon the piles, which in turn are 40 feet below the ground level, thus affording an effectual safeguard against settlement. The sheeting used in the process of excavation has been left in, preventing any subsidence of the sides. The new bridge, which is 110 feet distant from the old one, is worked by hydraulic power. The machinery is located in a special building, consisting of boiler and engine houses, and the chamber in which the hydraulic power is accumulated. There are two independent engines of the three-cylinder type, each engine self-contained and of sufficient power that only one will be required in ordinary weather to swing the bridge. A valve house is situated at a considerable elevation above the bridge, serving at once as a look-out station and for the control of the machinery, the power being switched on and off at will. The boilers, which with the engines, generate this power, are of the ordinary locomotive type, designed to stand a pressure of 200 lbs. per square inch, the ordinary working pressure being 120 lbs. The engines pump into the accumulators at a pressure of 700 lbs. per square inch, with steam pressure into the boilers of 100 lbs. per square inch. In consequence of the erection of the new bridge and the subsequent demolition of the old one, the whole of the station at Sutton Bridge had to be re-modelled. The platform now consists of one island platform 200 yards long, with a dock line down the centre at the Spalding end, the large pit which was formerly on the side of the old station having been filled in with material taken out of the dock. There is a double line up to each end of the bridge, and the passenger and goods station have been

re-arranged. The engineer of the bridge was Mr. McDonald, of Derby, and the work was carried out under the supervision of the resident engineer, Mr. John Briggs, of Derby. The sub-contractors under Messrs. Handyside and Co., were, for hydraulic machinery, Messrs. W. Armstrong and Co., Newcastle; earthwork, brickwork, &c., Mr. W. Mouseley, Rugeley; hydraulic and station buildings, Mr. E. Wood, Derby; superintendent of works for Messrs. Handyside and Co., Mr. Jas. Howard, Sutton Bridge.

According to an official return, the total value of the imports of foreign goods into and the exports from the Port of Wisbech, as follows during the years named:—

Year.		Imports.		Exports.
1890	...	£147,908	...	£14,272.
1891	...	£159,377	...	£7,696.
1892	...	£144,243	...	£7,806.
1893	...	£149,738	...	£2,791.
1894	...	£144,072	...	£4,049.

The import of wood at Wisbech is the largest of the ports on the Eastern Coast, viz., Lynn, Yarmouth or Harwich, and amounted in 1894 to 60,000 loads. In 1892, it was about 10,000 loads more than in 1894, owing to a greater briskness of trade among the merchants.

The following particulars of the Port are from the Local Government Board Report of the Port Sanitary Survey, in 1894:—

NUMBER OF SHIPS INWARDS DURING THREE YEARS.  
1890. 1891. 1892.

Class of Vessels.	1890		1891		1892	
	No.	Tonnage	No.	Tonnage.	No.	Tonnage.
Steamers	28	15,947	48	27,119	48	23,751
Foreign—Sailing	76	20,785	55	41,876	56	15,784
Total	104	36,732	103	68,995	104	39,585
Coast- } Steamers	112	8,444	124	9,269	135	10,311
wise— } Sailing	45	2,452	54	3,044	48	2,634
Total	157	10,896	178	12,313	183	12,945

The river Nene extends from Wisbech to Peterborough, Wansford, Oundle, Wellingborough, Kettering and Northampton. It is under the jurisdiction of Port Sanitary Authority as high as Bevis Hall, 2½ miles above Wisbech Town Bridge.

The Wisbech Canal has communication by navigable rivers with Outwell, Upwell, March, Whittlesey, Peterborough and places on the Nene up to Northampton, also with Downham Market, King's Lynn, St. Ives, Huntingdon, Bedford, Littleport, Ely and Cambridge.

Character of trade :—Imports :—Wood goods, oats, phosphate rock, and oil cake. Exports :—Coals.

Ports from whence ships arrive :—Foreign ports in Europe between White Sea and river Eider—Germany. Pensacola and other ports in United States on Atlantic; Groningen, Antwerp, Dunkirk and Ghent.

Coastwise :—London Northern coal ports, Grimsby, Yarmouth, Lowestoft, Penzance, and Port Madoc.

The boundaries of the Customs Port of Wisbech are defined by a Treasury warrant dated 20th October, 1735, to extend from "the point of Sutton Salt Marsh called Sutton Corner, that is, nearest a point of that marsh belonging to Sutton, where the Sutton Leam falls into the Wisbech Channel, by a line from Sutton Corner to Terrington Church, and the said Church bearing south-south-east from Sutton Corner, and from the said line or limits up Wisbech Channel and the river to Wisbech Bridge."

Apportionment of Expenses of Port Sanitary Authority :—The Riparian authorities are, Wisbech Urban Sanitary District (the whole), Sutton Bridge ditto (whole), Walsoken ditto (whole). Wisbech Rural Sanitary District Parishes :—Tydd St. Giles, Leverington, West Walton, Walpole St. Peter, Walpole St. Andrew, and Terrington St. Clement (part of). Holbeach Rural Sanitary District Parishes :—Tydd St. Mary and Central Wingland. The Urban Sanitary Authority for Borough of Wisbech in proportion to twice the rateable value of the Borough :—Urban Sanitary Authority for Sutton Bridge and for Walsoken in proportion to the rateable value of their districts. Rural Sanitary Authority of Wisbech and Holbeach in proportion to the rateable value of such contributory places as abut on the Port.

The following particulars are from *Lloyd's Register* :—

Bar Harbour. Depth on bar at low water, ordinary springs, 10 to 12 feet. Nene Parade (east side of river) length 7,000 to 8,000 feet; depth alongside at high water 15 to 25 feet; ordinary springs at low water 8 feet to 13 feet. The quay can be reached at high water, ordinary springs, by vessels drawing 13 to 17 feet. West Parade (west side of river) length 5,280 feet; depth alongside at high water, 15 to 25 feet; ordinary springs ditto, 8 to 13 feet. The quay can be reached at high water, ordinary springs, by vessels drawing 13 to 17 feet. There is a coal drop on the west side of the river.

## CHAPTER X.

THE UPPER RIVER NAVIGATION, THE COURT OF SEWERS,  
AND RIVERS CONSERVANCY.

SIR John Coode, C.E., when reporting to the Duke of Bedford upon the Nene, stated that he found, extending over a distance of thirty miles between Peterborough and the sea, that the river was under the jurisdiction of no less than twelve bodies of Commissioners, in addition to private owners.

In his report he writes:—

It will not, I hope, be considered out of place if I advert to the great number of bodies at present having jurisdiction over the Nene below Peterborough, and to the total absence of any such organization or co-operation as ought to exist in dealing with questions affecting the river generally. If regard be had to the maintenance of the river in a sound and wholesome condition for the purposes of navigation, drainage, protection of adjoining lands from flooding, supply of fresh water for domestic purposes, for cattle and for navigation in adjoining districts, such as Thorney Lordship and Middle Level. . . . It does appear anomalous that there should be no one body of Commissioners or Conservators, charged with the protection of these several interests; but that there should be so many authorities or controlling bodies often in conflict. . . . The most desirable course to adopt would seem to be the formation of one general conservancy, on which all the interests which now have control over the tidal compartment of the river should be represented.

The chief difficulty in carrying into effect improvements in the river, have undoubtedly arisen, as Sir John Coode points out,

from the want of concerted and harmonious action on the part of these numerous authorities. The hindrance has not been so much one of engineering, for during the past century the Rennies, Stephenson, Abernethys, and other eminent men in the profession have all pointed to the necessary schemes for the improvement of the Fen water courses. But to bring these numerous bodies and owners having jurisdiction over the Nene into agreement in the matters of drainage and navigation—not forgetting riparian interests, fresh water difficulties above, and land floods—has often proved an insurmountable obstacle to comprehensive measures. Three of these controlling bodies exercise their powers over the channel, four over the north banks and five over the south banks, beside private owners. Sir John Coode gives a list of these authorities (not including the collateral but important interests in connection with the Duke of Bedford and the Thorney Lordship, or the Middle Level District), which will be found on the following page. Since this tabular statement was compiled, there has been one change, viz., in the jurisdiction over the protection bank on the south side from the Canal Sluice to the County Boundary (Eastfield Bank), which is the last district but one mentioned in the list. In consideration of a payment of £200 per annum from the Court of Sewers, obtained by a tax on the Eastfield district of eighty acres, the Wisbech Corporation has accepted the responsibility of maintaining that bank, as a settlement of conflicting interests.

The multiplicity of authorities which is shown in the succeeding table, has undoubtedly been an almost insuperable barrier to the carrying out of comprehensive river works. The attempt to deal with them in piece-meal fashion, each authority along the river having control of a limited area, cannot possibly result in really effective administration. Such is the opinion of Mr. W. H. Wheeler, C.E., of Boston, who, in a paper read in 1881 before the Institute of Civil Engineers on “the Conservancy of Rivers” remarked, “It appears to be the nature of small local authorities to regard their neighbours with distrust and jealousy, and so difficult a matter is it to bring two neighbouring authorities into harmony for the accomplishment of a common object, that anyone who has tried to do so will regard the uniting of a considerable number as hopeless. River works are usually large in extent and costly, and are of such a character that a mode of treatment in sections would be both expensive and troublesome, and under certain physical conditions, it would often be impossible to do anything effectual to prevent the recurrence of floods, without

District and Limits.		Length in Miles.	Description or Title of the Controlling Authority.	Nature of Works under Control.
From	To			
Peterborough Bridge...	Bevis Hall ... ..	16½	Nene Navigation Comms. (Third Division) ...	Channel of River.
Bevis Hall ... ..	County Boundary below Wisbech ... ..	4	Wisbech Corporation... ..	" "
County Boundary ...	Crab Hole ... ..	10½	Commissioners of Nene Outfall ... ..	" "
		31		
Peterborough ... ..	Junction of Murrow Bank with River Bank ( ) at Wisbech ... ..	13½	North Level Commissioners ... ..	( Protection Banks on North Side of River.
Guyhirn ... ..	Wisbech Bridge (North Brink Bank) ... ..	5½	Wisbech Court of Sewers ... ..	" "
Wisbech Town ... ..	Frontage... ..	1	Private Owners ... ..	" "
Wisbech Town ... ..	County Boundary (Horse Shoe Bank)... ..	½	Wisbech Court of Sewers... ..	" "
County Boundary ...	Crab Hole ... ..	10½	Commissioners of Nene Outfall ... ..	" "
		31		
Stanground ... ..	Guyhirn ... ..	12½	Commissioners of Nene Wash Lands ... ..	Powers to Construct Bank.
Guyhirn ... ..	Walderssea Sluice... ..	3	Walderssea Commissioners ... ..	( Protection Banks on South Side of River.
Walderssea Sluice	Sluice just above Wisbech Bridge ... ..	2½	Wisbech Court of Sewers ... ..	" "
Sluice just above Wisbech Bridge ...)	Wisbech Canal Sluice ... ..	½	Private Owners ... ..	" "
Canal Sluice ... ..	County Boundary (Eastfield Bank) ... ..	1	Wisbech Court of Sewers ... ..	" "
County Boundary ...	Crab Hole ... ..	10½	Commissioners of Nene Outfall ... ..	" "
		30		

carrying out works in one or more of the adjoining districts. Conservancy areas should therefore be large, and no better definition of these can be found than the watershed of rivers where they are of moderate size."

Although "the Rivers Conservancy and Floods Prevention Bill" was before Parliament in 1880 and subsequent sessions, no legislation has taken place, and the same difficulties exist to-day as have, for many years past, prevented the river channel from being comprehensively dealt with. Improvements commenced at the outfall, and carried upwards, with the widening or deepening of the channel where required, or in some cases even narrowed, might result in a uniform channel, advantageous to navigation as well as to drainage interests. How long it may be before Parliament, by the formation of Conservancy Boards, will simplify river administration, remains to be seen, but there is no present prospect of its dealing with an undoubtedly thorny and difficult problem.

Mr. Wheeler in his paper on "the Conservancy of Rivers," before referred to, gives the following particulars of the Nene:—

The Nene rises in two springs at Daventry near Northampton, and owing to its windings, although in a direct course is only 60 miles, the length of the river is 99 miles. It has three tributaries, the Ise, the Harper, and Willow Brook, their united lengths being 52 miles. The Nene has a drainage area of about 1,055 square miles. The number of acres to one mile in length of the river and its tributaries is 4,474. The tidal flow is 34 miles at spring tides, reaching Northey Gravel, within 2½ miles of Peterborough, and at extreme tides even as far as Peterborough. The tide flows 3½ hours at Sutton Bridge, 7 miles from the estuary, and 2½ hours at Wisbech, 15 miles from the estuary. A spring tide which rose 23 feet 3 inches in the estuary, rose 20 feet 6 inches at Sutton Bridge, and 15 feet 2 inches at Wisbech. The navigable depth of water at Wisbech is about 22 feet at high water, spring tides, and 3 feet at low water. Through Wisbech in great floods there is a fall of 3 feet in less than a mile. In 1769, spring tides only rose 4 feet at Wisbech, and neap tides did not reach the town, but after the new channel (Foul Anchor Ferry to Crab Hole) was made about 1831, they rose from 15 to 16 feet. Within the last century, the amount spent on the improvement of the main channel of the Nene has been upwards of £450,000, about one fourth of which sum was raised on the navigation dues—to meet which all ships entering the port are subject to a charge of 1s. 0½d. per ton register—and the remainder by the Fenlands

With regard to the navigation of the upper portion of the river, we have already referred to the effect of the Nene Valley Scheme, when the Guyhirn and Waldersea Dams were removed,



and the placing in 1862 of the section of the river, 16½ miles in length, between Peterborough and Bevis Hall (about two miles above Wisbech Bridge) under the control of the Nene Navigation Commissioners. By this Act of 1862, all the powers of the Incorporated or Nene Valley Commissioners in the Third District were conferred on the Nene Navigation Commissioners (Third Division), and provision was made for the liabilities of the former body to be discharged, and for its dissolution to take place. To the Nene Navigation Commissioners were entrusted the maintenance of the navigation of the Nene in the Third Division, and the levying of the tolls and duties. But the injunction of 1865 prohibited the Commissioners from removing the shoal known as Northey Gravel, on the ground that it would prejudice the fresh water rights of the Duke of Bedford and the Middle Level, unless protection works were constructed for that purpose. This difficulty has led to considerable argument and investigation, and the Peterborough representatives on the Commission have maintained from time to time, that the navigation should be improved by deepening the channel. Representations having been made to the Board of Trade, Major Marindin, R.E., was instructed to report, and did so in February, 1892. On the 26th July, 1892, at the annual meeting of the Commissioners, the report of Major Marindin, R.E., on this Navigation (under the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888, section 41), was considered, and it was then resolved that Mr. Wolfe Barry, C.E., and Messrs. Coode, Son and Matthews, be requested to examine the report, and advise, in view of the extremely limited powers of the Commissioners, as to what works it would be desirable to carry out in the interests of the navigation. It was pointed out in the instructions given to the engineers that the maintenance, superintendence and conservancy of the navigation were alone authorised in the Act, the word "improvement," which had been inserted in the Bill, having been struck out in committee. The Act provided for the application of the navigation tolls, after payment of the cost of collection, as follows:—One half to the Treasurer of the Corporation of Wisbech. The other half to be retained by the Navigation Commissioners who are to apply it:—

- 1.—In payment of the general expenses of management.
- 2.—Towards the maintenance and conservancy of the navigation of the river in the Third Navigation Division.
- 3.—If there be any surplus, the same to be paid to the Treasurer of the Corporation of Wisbech.

The Commissioners had already taken, at various times, the

advice of the late Mr. John Kingston, a local engineer, and he had reported that very little benefit would result from dredging to the extent permissible, and advised the abandonment of the dredging scheme. On the other hand, Major Marindin thought the navigation might be considerably improved by dredging the bed of Smith's Leam. Having these conflicting opinions before them, the Commissioners were desirous of advice as to the best possible course to be adopted under the circumstances, strictly confining themselves to the existing legal powers vested in them. The report of Mr. Wolfe Barry, C.E., and Messrs. Coode, Son and Matthews, C.E.'s, was received in November, 1893, and stated that they had had an interview with the committee appointed by the Commissioners (Ald. Ford, of Wisbech, chairman, Messrs. Lyster, Pearson, Little and Laurence), and had subsequently, accompanied by Mr. Lyster and Mr. Laurence, inspected the Broadwater, and that portion of the Nene lying between Peterborough and Dog-in-a-Doublet Sluice, when the Wash lands were flooded and the river was in a swollen condition. Further, the river between Guyhirn and Peterborough, and also the Broadwater and Stanground Sluice, were examined in company with the Chairman and Mr. Little, when the water was low and the tide favourable, so that the river had been examined both in flood and drought. Sections of the river had been taken in the spring of the following year, which showed that there had been no deterioration of the navigation since 1884, that no practical benefit would be afforded to the navigation if the bed of Smith's Leam were dredged, where necessary, to bring it to the bed of 1852, so long as Northey Gravel remained at its present level, and that dredging only to the line of 1852 would be quite inadequate to place the navigation in a satisfactory condition. It should be explained that the injunction of 1865 prohibited the Commissioners from "cutting through, lowering or removing, the shoal or hard called Northey Gravel, or the shoal or hard immediately below or seaward of Dog-in-a-Doublet Sluice, or doing any other act which may prejudice, interrupt, alter, vary, interfere with, control or affect the existing navigable river or canal running between the river Nene and the town of Thorney, or the navigation thereof, or the supply of water from the said river Nene for the purposes of navigation and irrigation at and through Dog-in-a-Doublet Sluice." It was obvious that if the bed of Smith's Leam were lowered sufficiently to benefit navigation to Peterborough, the salt water would run higher up the river, and that the important fresh water rights of the Middle Level and the Duke of Bedford

would be prejudiced. But the engineers reported that it would be perfectly feasible to construct works below the Dog-in-a-Doublet, which, whilst ensuring the maintenance of the fresh water rights both to Thorney and the Middle Level, would admit of the lowering of Northey Gravel and the creation of a suitable navigable channel to Peterborough. The two interests which had hitherto, from existing conditions, been antagonistic, would both be benefitted by such a course. The expenditure would not be great, compared with the advantages to be derived from such works, but Parliamentary sanction would have to be obtained. But without these works, the engineers were of opinion that until the time arrived for dealing with the matter on a comprehensive plan, it would not be desirable to further resort to dredging, with the exception of the removal of a small patch in the bed of the Broadwater. Referring to Major Marindin's statement as to certain difficulties under which the navigation is carried on, the alternative route between Wisbech and Peterborough (*via* Outwell, March and Stanground) a distance of 34 miles, was compared with that of 19 miles by Smith's Leam. Additional tolls would have to be paid, viz., 1s. 2d. per ton, in addition to 6d. per ton which is paid to the Commissioners, whether the entire direct course is used or only the short length from Stanground to Peterborough. The time occupied on the journey by Wisbech Canal would be from two to three days, while, when there is sufficient water, the journey of 19 miles by Smith's Leam can be accomplished in nine hours. The engineers concluded their report by affirming that there need be no apprehension as to the further deterioration of the navigation, seeing that practically no change in the river bed had occurred above Cross Guns during the nine years interval between 1884 and 1893, other than that caused by insignificant dredging. Sir John Coode, C.E., in his report to the Duke of Bedford in 1874, on this point remarks:—Whilst the navigation, and also to some extent, the drainage, would be improved by the more rapid down-flow of the fresh water, and the consequent lowering of the surface level at Dog-in-a-Doublet, the flowing tide, meeting with less resistance, and having a larger vacuity to fill, would reach further up the river than at present.\* It

\* The level of the water at Peterborough Bridge at high water of the spring tide of 26th September, 1876, was practically 7ft. below high water at Stone Ends. On the neap tide of 21st September it was 8in. below high water at Stone Ends. The difference of 7ft. at springs is due in a considerable degree to the short duration of the flood arising from the obstruction at the Outfall, and to the state of the channel at and near Wisbech. This heaping of the tide is the modified form of the bore, which formerly was seen in the river at every spring tide.

will thus be seen that the lowering of the bed at Northey Gravel would prove detrimental to the fresh water supply to Thorney from the Nene." The Nene Navigation Commissioners, subsequently, with these facts before them, came to the inevitable conclusion that no effective works could be undertaken beyond those necessary for the maintenance *in statu quo* of the channel.

Recently, a further Board of Trade inquiry has been held, affecting the powers of the Commissioners as to the tolls levied. For some time, Peterborough had been agitating for a reduction of the tolls, and yielding to the representations made in a memorial by the citizens, the Board of Trade deputed the Hon. T. H. W. Pelham to hold an inquiry, under the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, into the alleged grievance. The Wisbech Corporation was called upon to express its opinion upon the suggested modifications of the tolls, and responding to this invitation, that body represented in the most forcible terms possible that Wisbech had had to pay very dearly for its river improvements, which had cost the town, under the Nene Valley Scheme, £60,000 to £70,000. When that body of Commissioners was dissolved in 1862, a sum of £8,000 had to be found by the Wisbech Corporation to meet its liabilities, and in return for this advance, it was authorised to receive one half of the tolls of 6d. per ton, and after payment of management expenses, any surplus that remained was also to be paid over to the Wisbech Municipal authorities. About £7,700 has been received from this source, but there is still a deficiency of some £10,000, and it was urged that it would be a manifest breach of faith to rob the town of some £150 of the annual revenue, given to it as an equivalent for the advance of this money. Fortunately the Parliamentary Committee recognised the justice of their contention, and energetically supported by several of the Nene Navigation Commissioners (of which body Ald. Ford is the Chairman, and Mr. Francis Jackson, the Clerk), it was ultimately decided that the tolls should remain unaltered.

It is caused by the retardation of the tidal wave from bars, and insufficient and crooked channels, and as these are diminished, the bore diminishes. In these rivers it was called the Eager, Aigre, or Ilygre, and its effects were so well known that special preparations were made for it by craft lying in the streams. In the Nene it vanished on the opening of the Outfall Cut, prior to which it used to rush up to Wisbech as a "cake" of water from 1ft. to 4ft. in height. The heights of low water in the Nene at Wisbech during spring and neap tides are practically equal, and the spring ebbs are sometimes as much higher than neap ebbs as the latter are normally above the former.—*Geology of the Fenland*, by Sydney J. B. Skerchley, 1877.

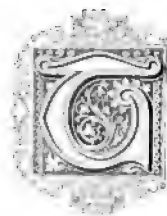
The Wisbech Court of Sewers is an ancient body charged with great and responsible duties. Many of the orders and presentments made in past centuries have been collected in a book which is included in the Corporation Library, and relate to the reparation of the banks, the removal of obstructions in, and the cleansing of the rivers and drains of the district. The first statute relating to their powers was that of 6th Henry VI, 1427, which enlarged their authority, authorised them to elect officers, and to collect and expend monies. In *Watson's History of Wisbech*, the proceedings of these bodies are quoted so far back as 1253, in the 38th year of Henry III, when the King on the occasion of a breach of the sea banks, directed his precept to the Sheriff of the County, requiring him to distrain upon all those who had lands within the precincts of the old banks about Wisbeche, for the repairs of the said breach. Geoffrey de Colvile, John de Colvile, and Thomas Mounpesson are among those named in the earlier records, and at a later period, 1571, it is noted that in Bishop Gooderick's time, part of the bank from Crabbe Marsh Gate, by the lands in Eastfield, "to the sluice of Wisbech," had been carried away, by the consent of the said Bishop, for the pavement of the Market Place in Wisbeche, and part by Mr. William Blomfield, for making a windmill there! In 1668, a Session of Sewers ordered a strong and sufficient sluice of stone and brick to be set up at the Horse Shoe below Wisbech, which, however, did not stand seven days, but was blown up by the tides. It would occupy a larger space than can here be given to trace the proceedings of a body, which has discharged, for centuries past, the difficult task of protecting the country from inundation, and maintaining the channels and banks of waterways, the efficient condition of which is vital to the drainage requirements of a large area of level country.

The Court of Sewers has still under its jurisdiction a considerable extent of protection banks of the Nene. On the north side these comprise about six miles, from Guyhirn to Wisbech Bridge, and a portion near the Horse Shoe Bank. On the south side there are  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Waldersea Sluice to the Sluice just above the Bridge at Wisbech, altogether about  $8\frac{1}{2}$  miles. The Court holds an annual sessions at which the Commissioners attend, and a jury is summoned to recommend the rates to be laid. Since the settlement of the difficulty with the Corporation as to the Eastfield bank, the rates have materially decreased and are likely to continue to do so, unless unforeseen changes arise. Mr. J. H. Chamberlin has been elected chairman

in succession to Col. Reed, who was appointed when the Rev. Frederic Jackson retired on account of ill-health. The clerk to the court is Mr. W. Welchman, who succeeded Mr. W. Goddard Jackson in that office.

The Wisbech Canal, which was constructed under an Act obtained in 1794, is six miles long, and connects the Old Nene at Outwell with the Wisbech river. It was made with the idea that the merchandise of Wisbech might by its means, traverse the fens in any direction, and that water conveyance would thus be of great advantage. A meeting was called in 1792, shares of £100 each were eagerly taken, which were afterwards raised to £120, and the Canal was completed. In 1836, the Company had to borrow a large sum for the erection of a new sluice. The undertaking has not proved a remunerative one, and the shares have recently been sold at a low price. The Canal enables communications by water to be made with Outwell, Upwell, March, Downham Market, Lynn, St. Ives, Huntingdon, Bedford, Littleport, Ely, and Cambridge. It is managed by a committee chosen from the shareholders, and Mr. E. M. D. C. Jackson has succeeded his father, Mr. E. H. Jackson in the clerkship of the Company.

## CHAPTER XI.

WORKS OF SANITATION. THE WATER SUPPLY AND  
DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS.

THE importance to a community of efficient measures of sanitation has happily received more adequate recognition during recent years, than was the case half-a-century ago. At the latter period, both Wisbech and Walsoken were without efficient sanitary arrangements. The supply of water was of the most uncertain character, and its quality very impure, whilst there was an almost entire absence of local arrangements or public works to promote the health of the inhabitants. Intermittent fever was prevalent, epidemics were frequent in their visitation, and few places suffered more severely than Wisbech and Walsoken during the cholera years of 1847 and 1848. But a remarkable change in this respect has been effected by the energy of the Local Boards of Wisbech and Walsoken, and the enlightened policy pursued by some far-seeing inhabitants of those sanitary areas. The death rate in Wisbech is less than one-half that of fifty years since, and whilst some of the large centres of population are still suffering from the difficulties of water supply, Wisbech and Walsoken are exceptionally fortunate in the possession of a practically inexhaustible supply of pure and wholesome water. In place of a high mortality, an exceptionally low one indicates that the large sums of money expended to accomplish this result have not been misapplied, but that, in its cleanliness and healthy surroundings, the town and neighbourhood

can point to many advantages of sanitation, which make it a desirable place of residence. The circumstances under which these changes have been effected, it is our purpose to attempt to describe in this chapter.

The first visitation of cholera that needs to be recorded here, took place in June, 1832, but it assumed more favourable symptoms in Wisbech than in most places, although in Upwell and Nordelph its ravages were severe. From twenty to thirty persons fell victims to it in Wisbech, the Horse Fair and Timber Market having the worst cases. Some old and dilapidated houses on the South Brink, three-quarters of a mile away, were temporarily adapted to the purposes of a hospital. A portion of the ground which now adjoins the Church Cemetery, was purchased and used for interments. The visitations of 1848 and 1849 were far more serious, and in the former year, it was remarked that the earliest cases had appeared at Nordelph, in the same house in which it had broken out in 1832. In the epidemic of October, 1849, 101 cholera cases were reported in Wisbech alone, within seven weeks, forty-seven deaths taking place in the borough, and twenty-one in the adjacent parish of Wisbech St. Mary. In this instance, the cholera broke out in Mouth Lane in the direction of Wisbech St. Mary, and when it reached Wisbech, took a somewhat similar direction in the town to that of 1832. Mr. Smith Burman, Medical Officer of the Union, attributed its malignancy to imperfect drainage and the fact that drinking water was obtained from the River, Canal and other impure sources. From August 13th to October 5th, 1849, there were altogether 140 cases and 66 deaths, which were distributed in the following localities:—North Brink, 12 cases, 6 deaths; South Brink, 13 cases, 5 deaths; Timber Market and Elm Road, 51 cases, 25 deaths; Horse Fair, 31 cases, 14 deaths; Sandyland, 2 cases, 1 death; Union House, 10 cases, 6 deaths. At Wisbech St. Mary there were 21 cases and 9 deaths. At the termination of the epidemic, so many nurses had fallen victims that Dr. Smith Burman stated that it was only with great difficulty that persons could be found to attend upon the living.

This serious position of matters prompted the Government to dispatch one of their Inspectors, Mr. William Lee, C.E., to hold an inquiry in Wisbech and Walsoken as to the cause of these outbreaks. The Public Health Act of 1848, had been passed into law during the epidemic of an previous year, with a view to giving legal powers to deal decisively with such emergencies, and to enforce improved sanitary arrangements throughout



the country. The Inspector was, in the first instance, directed to inquire into the sanitary condition of Walsoken, and for that purpose he received evidence at the Rose and Crown Hotel, on November 28th, 1849. The evidence of Mr. James Lilley and Mr. R. Quigley Wallace, surgeons, was to the effect that during six weeks there had been twenty cholera cases and six deaths in Walsoken, that the uncleanness of the parish promoted infectious diseases, and that the parish was suffering from want of proper drainage and pure water. The Rev. Robert Reynoldson, Non-conformist Minister; Messrs. William Sharpe, Churchwarden, Abraham Catling, Poor Law Guardian; William Pike Bays, Matthew Osborn, Surveyor of Highways; Joseph Feast, Assistant Overseer; James Siggee, John Gardiner, John See, and others gave evidence upon these points. Mr. Lee, in a detailed report, referred to the high percentage of deaths in Walsoken, compared with other parts of Norfolk, and added—"I think the conclusion must not only be that an awful waste of life is now going on in Walsoken, but that the sanitary condition of Wisbech forming part of the same town must be also very defective." He urged that the responsibility was laid upon the General Board of Health, in such cases where the average mortality for seven years had exceeded 23 per thousand of the inhabitants, to exercise their powers to enforce that the health conditions of Wisbech and Walsoken, be improved by the construction of proper works. The question, he added, was one of life and death. With reference to the Borough of Wisbech, the Inspector reported that he had met many of the inhabitants privately, and as the result of a long conference, they pledged themselves to sign a petition in support of his recommendation, and the *Wisbech Advertiser* had also, in its columns, urged upon the inhabitants the desirability of effecting sanitary improvements. Unfortunately, a handbill appeared, alleging that enormous expense would be incurred, and urging upon the ratepayers not to sign their names. The promoters were consequently for a time prevented from obtaining as general a support of the inhabitants as they had hoped would result from the inquiry and report.

As a necessary sequence of this investigation at Walsoken, the same Inspector was dispatched to Wisbech in the following July (1850) to inquire into the sanitary condition of Wisbech, and after sitting for a day or two in the Lecture Room, Crescent Passage, he adjourned his inquiry to the Town Hall. Mr. Lee inspected the town, accompanied by Messrs. Thomas Dawbarn, W. P. Bays, F. Fawcett, R. Reid, W. Reeve, Rev. R. Reynoldson,

F. J. Utting, Jos. Groom, J. Curtis, Wm. Adams (Town Chamberlain), R. Wherry, G. Marshall, Neil Walker (author of the *History of Wisbech*), J. Gardiner, J. Gapp, and others. The evidence of Mr. Smith Burman, surgeon, and Medical Officer of the Wisbech Union, showed that cholera was worse in 1849 in Wisbech than in London, and that according to the Registrar General's return, the average mortality of Wisbech was then nearly 30 per 1,000, compared with 20 per 1,000 throughout England and Wales. Mr. Gardiner stated that the call by the Board of Guardians for the half-year during the cholera visitation, was £400 above the corresponding half of the previous year. A tabular statement of preventible diseases furnished by Mr. G. D. Collins, Superintendent Registrar, showed that the mortality per thousand was as follows:—1841, 25·67; 1842, 37·10; 1843, 33·63; 1844, 27·67; 1845, 24·30; 1846, 25·52; 1847, 27·00; 1848, 34·71; 1849, 37·68; average 30·42. During the inquiry seven specimens of water were taken for analysis, viz., Deadman's Pond pump, Union Workhouse pump, River Nene, three hours before ebb tide, River Nene, two hours before ebb tide, Spring Well pump at Rose and Crown Hotel, Public pump, Old Market, and Setch, on the river Nar, 11½ miles from Wisbech. Mr. F. J. Utting had submitted a scheme for supplying Wisbech from the last-named source at a cost of £18,000—hence the inclusion of a sample of water from that source. The conclusions to which the Inspector came, and which were afterwards given in his printed report, were briefly as follows:—That with the exception of the pavement of streets and scavenging, there were no arrangements or public works to promote the health of the inhabitants; that the supply of water was worse than that of any other town he had visited; that the lodging houses were crowded to excess, and that other unsanitary conditions prevailed. He recommended the provision of an abundant supply of pure water, a proper system of drainage, the better paving of streets, and improved surface cleansing, maintaining that the cost would be ultimately less than the present inefficient administration. In order to carry out these improvements, he advised the adoption of the Public Health Act of 1848, the election of a Board of Health for Walsoken, consisting of six persons, and also that for the purposes of main sewerage, Wisbech and Walsoken should be united into one district.

The result of these inquiries was soon apparent. The Corporation determined, on the urgent appeal of Ald. Wherry and others, to adopt the Public Health Act, and for the purposes

of main sewerage, Wisbech and Walsoken were united into one district. The first meeting of the Wisbech and Walsoken Local Board of Health, at which the Mayor, Mr. Henry Morton, presided, was held in September, 1852, and a committee was appointed to consider the best means of securing a supply of pure water. A few days later, the inhabitants of Wisbech assembled at the Exchange Hall to hear the proposal of the promoters of a water company, which contemplated obtaining a supply from the river, but on the motion of Mr. Edward Jackson, the meeting declined to pledge itself to support such an undesirable proposal. Mr. Lee subsequently visited Wisbech to confer with the authorities as to the precautions necessary to guard against cholera, but at the end of 1854 another outbreak took place, the first case appearing in the same locality as in 1849—in Mouth Lane, Wisbech St. Mary. In August, 1854, 12 deaths from cholera were reported in Wisbech, and at Tydd Gote 15 deaths occurred in as many days, additional medical assistance being procured in the latter place to meet the emergency. Dr. Milroy made a special report to the General Board of Health on this cholera visitation to Wisbech, to the effect that from August 12th to October 19th 140 cases were reported, 50 deaths taking place, and at Wisbech St. Mary 23 cases and 9 deaths. From statistics compiled by Mr. Cornelius Walford, F.S.S., &c., barrister-at-law (for private circulation), upon the Cholera Visitation of 1854, we find that in a list of 18 places in England most heavily stricken by the disease in that year, Wisbech ranked fourth highest, the deaths being at the rate of 49 per 10,000 of the population. In London they were 43, Liverpool and West Derby 30, and at Norwich 28. No wonder that the Corporation once again began to bestir itself, vigorously prompted by the Government authorities. Mr. Robert Stephenson, C.E., was applied to for a report on the drainage and water supply. This was received in May, 1855, and ordered to be carried into effect, the General Board of Health in London sanctioning a loan of £8,000 for sewerage and £13,400 for water supply. But matters were very much delayed in consequence of the burdens imposed on the town by the Nene Valley Works. In June, 1856, Messrs. Lee and Laver's tender for £6,271 for sewerage works in Wisbech and Walsoken had been actually accepted, subject to the approval of the London authorities, when a legal difficulty arose as to the disposal of the loan, and the amount which had been raised to meet the preliminary expenses was applied to the payment of the town engineer's bill in connection with the Nene Valley Works. In December, 1856, Mr.

William Ranger, C.E., held an inquiry at the Exchange Hall as to the Provisional Order constituting a Main Sewerage District, comprising the borough of Wisbech and the parish of Walsoken. For a time, nothing was done, until the dry summer of 1857 and consequent scarcity of water revived the question of water-supply, and a private company was proposed to be formed. Nothing, however, came of it, and the provision of gas works, the river works, and other measures, further postponed any action for seven years longer. The death-rate in 1864 was stated to be 25 per thousand, and this high rate of mortality, it was argued, was capable of being materially reduced by good water. In 1863 matters came to a climax. The *Advertiser* of April 2nd thus describes the position of affairs:—"There is a great want of water, everybody crying out for it, the rainfall having been very small. The river water is not pronounced good, and the question needs to be asked—When shall we have Waterworks?"

In fact, it was as in Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*—

Water, water, everywhere  
Nor any drop to drink.

For a long time previously, Mr. George Dawbarn had realised the difficulty in which the town was placed. The heavy debt forced upon it by the action of the Nene Valley Commissioners prevented the Corporation from undertaking a scheme which would necessitate increased rates. Consequently it was determined to form a private company, and a few months later, notice of an application to Parliament was given by Messrs. Wise and Dawbarn, for powers to incorporate a company. In February, 1864, a public meeting was held at the Town Hall to assist in promoting in Parliament the Wisbech Waterworks Bill, and a petition in its favour was signed by over 1,000 of the inhabitants. "It will be an eventful day in Wisbech annals" said the local paper "when a good supply of water is secured, and all who are anxious for the welfare of the town should use their best efforts to accomplish so desirable an object." The Bill came before the House of Commons' Committee on May 5th, 1864, Sir B. W. Bridges, Earl Grosvenor, and other members composing the tribunal. Mr. O'Malley, Q.C., in opening the case of the promoters, said the water was drawn from brick-pits and, impure as it was, the inhabitants were glad to purchase it at one halfpenny for one or two buckets. He pointed out that the dearth of water had contributed to the unhealthiness of Wisbech, cholera, intermittent fevers, and other epidemics having

increased the rate of mortality to a much higher point than that of surrounding towns. The source from which the promoters proposed to obtain their supply was at Marham Springs, a distance of about 18½ miles from Wisbech, and not only was there a sufficient quantity to supply a town many times the size of Wisbech, but the water was of the purest quality (having been subject to a most rigid analysis by Dr. Letheby), and it was the product of a chalk district. The company proposed only to take the stream belonging to Mr. Edward Makemead at Marham, but to have permissive power to take streams belonging to Sir Thomas Hare (father of Mr. Thomas L. Hare, M.P. for South-west Norfolk), and Mr. Villebois. Mr. Makemead heartily supported the scheme, but the other owners appeared as opponents. Mr. William Hutchinson, who was Mayor at the time and entered into the project with much energy, Dr. H. Rooke, Messrs. H. H. English, R. Wherry, and Geo. Dawbarn gave evidence in support of the Bill. Mr. Taylor, who had lived 40 years at Marham, deposed before the Committee that he had never known one of the springs to run dry or freeze, and from the evidence of Mr. Edward Easton, the engineer, it appeared that Mr. Makemead's spring was delivering 797,760 gallons per day, Mr. Villebois' 509,000, Sir Thomas Hare's 123,000. Of this large quantity the Wisbech Company then proposed to take but 270,000 gallons per day. The effect would be that instead of a million and a half gallons running to waste, more than a million would still run away, and some 300,000 gallons would be diverted to Wisbech. The result of an enquiry extending over three days was that the Committee decided unanimously that the preamble of the Bill had been proved. But another and severe ordeal awaited the Bill. The opposition of the great landowners threatened to kill the measure when it was before the Committee of the Lords. It however passed; being saved by the vote of Lord Belper, newly raised to the peerage and previously known as the head of the firm of Strutt, cotton manufacturers. So critical was the position of this Bill at one time, that its promoters had given it up for lost, when a fresh argument was thought of and suggested to their counsel, Mr. O'Malley, who, obtaining leave to further address the Committee, advanced his point with such convincing force, that the Lords' Committee were won over and passed the Bill, proving the truth of the adage, *nil desperandum*. The successful result was received in Wisbech with corresponding relief and satisfaction, particularly in view of the drought then prevailing. Whilst the formation of the

Company was in progress, Wisbech was suffering severely with water famine, and the Borough Surveyor was compelled to arrange to supply householders in the town by water-carts sent round daily during the drought, a "gate" (two buckets full) of water being sold at a nominal charge. Two-thirds of the houses were practically destitute of water which was fit for drinking or washing. The supply available was nauseous and unwholesome, matters becoming so serious that it was suggested that it should be brought in barrels from Lynn and other neighbouring towns. In many cases, the engine-drivers considerably helped the poor by bringing them drinking water by train from Lynn and Cambridge. In one place of worship in the town, the minister, preaching from the words "The poor and needy seek water," appealed to the more wealthy inhabitants to aid the poor around them by assisting in the provision of this necessity of life. Under this stress of circumstances, the shares in the new Company were readily subscribed, and it became evident that such privations would not be much longer experienced.

The first formal meeting of the Wisbech Waterworks Company was held in the Town Hall, on September 5th, 1864, when Mr. George Dawbarn, who was the moving spirit in the undertaking, and to whom the town owes this inestimable boon, occupied the chair. It was then stated that a contract had been entered into for the construction of the works at a cost of £21,500. All the shares were taken and applications made beyond the number at the disposal of the directors. The Mayor's "water party" of that year, which had in Mr. Richard Young's Mayoral years been an excursion by steamer to the Eye to inspect the buoys and beacons, took the appropriate form of a visit to Marham springs, an unofficial programme stating that "instead of trusting to the treacherous ocean the party will cast anchor at the Bell at Marham, and, after dinner, drink the toasts in water from the springs or in any other manner which the company may individually approve." One interesting feature of the day's proceedings was the presentation of an illuminated copy of a resolution passed by the Local Board of Health, thanking Mr. Makemead for the excellent services rendered to the Borough in allowing his spring to be taken by the Waterworks Company. This was now handed to Mr. Makemead, with complimentary allusions to his co-operation and courteous assistance. In the speeches, after dining at Marham, a full mead of praise was awarded to Mr. George Dawbarn (whose services to the town in this direction had been publicly acknowledged by his election

as Mayor in the previous November), for the indomitable energy which he had shown in overcoming the difficulties in the formation of the company. Mr. W. Horsley was appointed the first manager of the works, and it is only justice to the memory of this gentleman to record how valuable were the services he rendered in connection with the enterprise. His intelligence, geniality, and tact on various occasions smoothed grave difficulties in the path of the young company, and many of the inhabitants to-day can bear witness to the uniform uprightness combined with courtesy, which characterised him in all his business dealings with them.

On July 22nd, 1865, the first drops of water—an earnest of great benefits to follow—were received through the pipes. The water, which was allowed to overflow in different parts of the town, awakened a widespread interest, and it was resolved that “the greatest work of modern times in connection with the borough,” as it was called, should be fittingly celebrated by a public holiday, on September 28th, 1865. The streets on that day were decorated, and a luncheon at the Corn Exchange preceded the opening, at which Lord Robert Montagu, Mr. (afterwards Sir) William Bagge, M.P., were the guests of the Mayor and Mayoress (Mr. and Mrs. George Dawbarn), about 250 ladies and gentlemen also attending. Following the luncheon, a procession was formed to the Market Place, where a platform had been erected in the centre of that open space. Mr. Horsley had transformed the central lamp-post into a handsome fountain, so effectively adorned at the base with foliage and flowers, that it formed quite a conspicuous and ornamental feature. After some opening speeches had been made, Lord Robert Montagu moved a lever on the platform which turned on the water, and from the central jet of the fountain shot up a column of water in magnificent style. The spray was carried by the wind, which happened to lie in the direction of the platform, and unmistakably convinced those within its reach that the Waterworks were really open, notwithstanding the noble Lord’s declaration to that effect had been omitted. In the evening, a largely-attended conversation was held in the Public Hall, at which Lord Robert Montagu dealt with the question of the sanitation of towns, and the beneficial effects of good water and drainage upon the health of their inhabitants.

The springs near Marham, in Norfolk, from which the water is brought, are about  $18\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Wisbech, and now that March, which is 10 miles further is also connected, the water

is forced a distance of  $28\frac{1}{2}$  miles, supplying *en route* Wisbech, Walsoken, March, including the Great Eastern Railway works at this important junction, and several large villages on the pipe line.

Few people, probably, have visited the Marham springs, beyond the Board of Directors and their friends who annually inspect the works. Some description of the source of the water supply and the plant required to bring it to Wisbech may be here given. The actual springs are near the centre of the village of Marham, Norfolk, a quiet, agricultural hamlet surrounded by hills, which collect the water for a distance of 16 square miles or more, the apex of the undulations being found close to Swaffham. The rainfall of this area supplies these and other springs in the neighbourhood, the flow of water being arrested by a bank of gault clay in the strata that sends the water to the surface. On what was once the village common, an area of some 30 acres, now vested in trustees under the Charity Commissioners, and let for grazing purposes, there are a number of similar springs where the water may be seen bubbling up in a manner indicating the abundance of water in the neighbourhood. One pool is known as the "Bottomless Well," because it is said that no plumb line has been found which would determine its depth. The chalk formation of the soil is apparent, but particularly so, when the large gates enclosing the small paddock belonging to the Wisbech Waterworks Company are entered and the chalk bed of the stream is seen. This paddock was purchased from Mr. Makemead, and here is to be found the actual accumulation of water from which the supply to Wisbech is drawn. A narrow channel, 200 to 300 yards long, with sloping banks of green sward, encloses a rippling stream of water, unsurpassed in its clearness and purity, the white chalk bed over which it runs being as clearly visible as though only glass intervened instead of water. It is seen welling up from both the sides and the bed of the stream. At the further end, the head of the pipe is visible, the water being drawn through its open sides into the suction pipe. Adjacent to this is a weir, over which thousands of gallons run to waste, into the river Nar. The Act requires that a certain portion should be allowed to run away, for the benefit of drainage interests, though the requisite amount to comply with this provision is much less than that which finds its way over the weir. To meet the requirements of the Wisbech Waterworks Company, about 440,000 gallons are daily drawn through the 12 in. suction pipe to the pumping station, while 350,000 gallons are allowed to run to waste. The supply is thus inexhaustible, even



in the driest of seasons, and it is a remarkable fact, that when a heavy rainfall takes place, it will be from three to four months before the water that has fallen in the more distant parts of the watershed will find its way to the spring channel. Consequently if July or August in any year happen to be months of drought, the actual effect is not felt on the springs until the following November or December, by which time there is probably much less demand for water than in the drier summer months. A rain gauge close to the springs, records the rainfall, the schoolmaster of the village registering the amount daily. Originally, the water flowed from the springs to the pumping station by gravitation, through an earthenware pipe, but an iron pipe has since been substituted, and the water is more expeditiously drawn through the pipes by suction. The pumping station is situated close to the railway at Wiggshall St. Germans, about 12 miles from Wisbech and is within reach of a telegraph office in communication with the borough. Here the two pumping engines, each of 37 horse power, are in duplicate, the more recent one having been fixed in 1889 and started by Mrs. Edmund Dawbarn. Since 1877, the service has been a continuous one, viz., in the night as well as the day, and though this development has involved increased outlay, it has greatly added to the efficiency and reliability of the supply, especially when long droughts have greatly increased the consumption. The water is pumped into a nine-inch delivery pipe as far as Wisbech, beyond which point a twelve-inch main has been laid to March. In consequence of the enlarged area of supply, and the difficulty of maintaining a uniform and sufficient pressure, the Board of Directors, on the advice of their engineer, Mr. Edward Easton, C.E. (who originally constructed the works and still maintains his connection as adviser to the company to the present day) erected in 1894 a new water tower at Fridaybridge, between Wisbech and March. It is a remarkably solid brick structure, 112 feet high and 40 feet square, with walls at the base which are 6 feet 9 inches thick. The tower is a conspicuous object and a fine specimen of good brickwork. Special care was taken to ensure the stability of the foundations, the soil being of a treacherous nature, a warning of which had been given by the settlement of the foundations of the modern church of St. Mark's, Fridaybridge. The foundations of the tower were consequently carried to a depth of over 30 feet, until the Kimmeridge clay was reached by the contractors, a considerable sum of money being spent in providing against any possible insecurity. At the top of the tower, which is

reached by a convenient staircase, there is a circular tank having a diameter of 36 feet, and a capacity of 100,000 gallons. This tank receives the surplus supply during the night, and equalises the pressure during the day. A contemplated enlargement of a part of the delivery pipe is expected to further increase its usefulness in this respect. The contractors for the tower were Messrs. Collins and Bardell, of Downham, and for the tank, Messrs. Dodman and Co., of Lynn. The company is managed by a board of nine directors, over whom Mr. George Dawbarn, J.P., is still and has been for thirty-two years the Chairman, as well as the pioneer and mainstay of its prosperous career. The capital of the company has increased from £30,000 to £60,000, upon which sum good dividends are paid, the debentures of the company being available for trust investments, owing to the ordinary stock having paid five per cent. for ten years past. Mr. Robert Dawbarn is the clerk to the company, and the works are under the efficient management of Mr. R. J. Sharman, who succeeded Mr. Horsley in that office. Suggestions have been made that the supply should be extended to other places, Chatteris having made overtures to the company. It has also been proposed that a branch to Downham and Upwell should receive consideration, but no definite steps have been taken beyond estimating the cost in the case of Chatteris. Whether any further extensions may take place will probably depend upon the inducements held out by the applicants, who seek to participate in the advantages which have been secured by the enterprise and good management of Wisbech citizens. Whilst Wisbech has been enjoying this boon for 30 years past, larger provincial towns have only recently been expending large sums of money in improving their supplies. Manchester has tapped Thirlmere Lake, Glasgow has an unlimited supply from Loch Katrine, Birmingham is spending six millions upon its works, and Edinburgh proposes to draw upon St. Mary's Loch, whilst parts of London are still very insufficiently and unsatisfactorily supplied. Of all the larger centres of population, but one or two have brought water a greater distance than Wisbech, yet in spite of this great initial cost to a small provincial company, the price which the company's shares realize in the market indicate that the undertaking has proved to be a safe and remunerative investment for the shareholders, and that its management is highly creditable to the energy and tact of those who have directed its successive developments.

Mr. J. M. Heathcote, in his *Reminiscences of Fen and Mere*,

wrote, some years after, when the success of the undertaking was assured, as follows:—

It is a matter of great congratulation that Wisbech has taken the lead in this important question of the day, the storage of water. From information which I have received from Mr. Horsley, the manager, I can state that the great work of supplying the town of Wisbech with water was undertaken by a company, and that the water runs direct from the chalk formation, about eight miles distant, through an iron pipe to a receiving well, from which it is pumped direct into the main extending about another twelve miles to Wisbech. The works were opened in 1865 and the whole cost was £24,800. The company pays a good dividend and this fact is a still greater cause of congratulation, because if such an enterprise can be made to pay, the noble example will be more generally followed.

When the water supply difficulty had been surmounted, there was yet the question of drainage to be dealt with. The system of making the river the receptacle for the drainage was neither legal or satisfactory, either to the Local Government or the local authorities. Early in 1866, the Corporation had the matter under its consideration, and Mr. Geo. Dawbarn advocated that an efficient and comprehensive scheme should be devised. A month later, Mr. Easton, C.E., attended a meeting of the Council, at which the proposal was further discussed, and by the casting vote of the Mayor (Mr. F. Ford), it was decided to call a public meeting. The matter remained in abeyance until August, when the precautions urged by the Government in view of a possible cholera visitation led the Mayor, with Dr. Howson, the recently-appointed Vicar of Wisbech, and the Inspector, to make a personal visitation of the worst parts of the town. A Nuisances Removal Committee was constituted, and it was determined that Messrs. Stephenson and Borthwick's plans, which had been prepared some years previously, should be revised, and Mr. Easton, C.E., was selected to report upon them. The question of sewerage excited much warmth and often bitterness of feeling, the expected cost of the works arousing opposition, from a section of the ratepayers, of a very determined nature. To avoid this outlay, it was suggested that the Home Secretary's permission should be obtained to drain into the lower portion of the river at a distance from the town, but it was obvious that no such authority could be legally given, and it was not considered a desirable solution of the matter. The November elections were fought on the sewerage question, although Mr. Easton's report was not actually before the Hall until the following March (1867).

It was then estimated that the cost of the works would be £11,773, not including 120 acres of land which would be required for the utilisation of sewage on the irrigation principle. The Corporation hesitated to embark on a somewhat speculative and costly undertaking, and Mr. Gay carried a resolution, postponing the scheme *sine die*, by eleven to seven votes. But the matter was too urgent to remain quiescent, and in the following October it again forced itself upon the Local Sanitary Authority, which sought to extricate itself by taking counsel's opinion as to the legality of discharging sewage into the tidal river. Evidently the opinion, if it ever were sought at all, was adverse, for nothing more was heard of this proposal, and matters drifted on until 1870, when Mr. John Young Skinner put the question to the test by constructing a drain without the consent of the Local Board, and having been summoned and fined by the Borough Magistrates, he appealed to the Home Secretary. What strengthened Mr. John Young Skinner's case was the fact that although Wisbech was at that time properly speaking an unsewered town, a clause (no doubt taken from some existing rules in force elsewhere) had been inserted in the Bye-Laws, requiring householders to drain their various properties into the public sewer. The Home Office communicated with the Corporation and an inquiry was opened by the Government Inspector, Mr. Robert Morgan, on August 30th, 1870, into the sanitary condition of the town. Mr. Morgan intimated that the allegations in Mr. John Young Skinner's memorial as to the alleged default were, to a certain extent, admitted to be correct, but the evidence offered disclosed a much more serious state of things than was represented by this single case. From his official report, under the 49th section of the Sanitary Act of 1866, to the Home Secretary (Mr. Henry A. Bruce, M.P.), the following extract is taken:—

The average of the rate of mortality in the parish of Wisbech for the last seven years is 23 per 1,000. The allegations in the memorial as to the alleged default were to a certain extent admitted to be correct, but the evidence submitted disclosed a much more serious state of things than that set forth by the memorialist. It appears that the ground under Wisbech is one complete network of cesspools, privies, and wells, all intermingled. There are a few surface drains, but no system of sewerage exists within the Borough. The open gratings connecting with the surface drains are untrapped, and the effluvia arising therefrom is at times most objectionable. The memorialists' houses have no drainage whatever. In the winter time the cellars of many houses in New Wisbech are flooded to a depth of from three to four feet. The average depth of the cellars throughout the

town, below the level of the streets, is between seven and eight feet. The financial position of the town is thus:—

	£	s.	d.
Mortgages on Estates... ..	15,000	0	0
Ditto on Harbour dues ... ..	50,500	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£65,500	0	0
	<hr/>		
Annual interest to be paid on the above	£2,872	10	0

The total annual rateable value of property assessable within the district is £34,075. The amount of money borrowed upon sanctions obtained from this office is £3,756 17s.

The question of sewerage has been under the consideration of the Local Board of Health during the last sixteen years, and engineers have at various times reported thereon, but owing to the financial embarrassment of the town, and the fear of heavy expenditure in maintaining the river defences, the matter has been allowed to remain in abeyance. The Local Board of Health are of opinion that owing to the nature of ground (sand and silt) through which the sewers must pass, no efficient works of sewerage could be carried out, but on this point evidence was given by practical men to the contrary effect, and also that there was sufficient land in the neighbourhood which could be obtained upon reasonable terms, suitable for the utilization of sewage by irrigation. Owing to the great depth of the bed of the river below the surface of the town, and the flat and low level of the locality, I fear that no system of sewerage can be projected for the entire district to convey all sewage from both sides of the river to one outfall, and to discharge it by gravitation. So that pumping must be resorted to, and two outfalls provided. From the evidence submitted, and from an inspection of the district, I consider that serious nuisances from stagnation of sewage, caused by the want of sewerage works, exist throughout the entire district, and more particularly in the following localities, namely:—The Church Cemetery, Victoria Road, World's End, Leverington Road, Pickard's Lane, &c.; from these drains the stench is at times intolerable. I consider that the sanitary condition of the Borough is in almost the same wretched condition as when Mr. Lee reported on it in 1850, except that since then Wisbech has obtained a supply of water independently of the wells, pumps, and ponds from which its supply was then obtained, and the purer water supply has, no doubt, tended to decrease the death rate, which was at that time 30 per 1,000. I consider therefore that the Local Board of Health for the district of the Borough of Wisbech and Walsoken have clearly made default in not providing their district with the proper works of main sewerage, sewage outfall and sewage disposal, all of which are urgently required, and I beg in conclusion to recommend that within one month from the date of this report the Wisbech Local Board of Health intimate to you their determination upon the subject of the sewerage of their district, and should they decline to act in the matter, the powers conferred upon you by the 49th section of the Sanitary Act, 1866, be enforced for the execution of the required works of sewerage, the expenses to be charged upon the district.

Mr. Skinner had been three times summoned for infringing the bye-laws by throwing refuse into the streets, and fined, but persisted in his contention that the Corporation were bound to provide proper drainage arrangements for the town, and announced his intention to make a drain into the nearest sewer. The result of this was that considerable pressure was brought to bear by the London authorities (who were advised of the proceedings) upon the Corporation, and the possibility of compelling the town to divert the sewerage already draining into the river was significantly suggested. In September, 1871, after much negotiation, the Corporation decided to purchase from Mr. John Spikings a farm of 217 acres, with cottage, garden, and out-buildings, opposite the Foul Anchor, in Tydd St. Giles and Tydd St. Mary, for £11,000, and subsequently appointed Mr. Easton, C.E., engineer of the proposed irrigation scheme of sewerage. To accomplish this result, Mr. George Dawbarn had worked most energetically and persistently, as will be seen by the following extract from the *Advertiser* of that date:—

Mr. George Dawbarn, with singular determination, has carried this matter through, without putting himself very prominently forward in the discussion. He has made the subject so much his study, has devoted his leisure to its pursuit and will exercise so much oversight in the execution of the works, that every one will wish that he may live to see them completed and paid for; the sewage farm free from encumbrances; the Waterworks supplying every cottage in the town; and the Recreation Ground abounding with beautiful trees, and bearing eloquent testimony to the energy which originated and carried out such improvements in Wisbech.

But there were still long and tedious delays, and it was not until January, 1874, that the mortgage of £12,000 was completed to cover the purchase of the farm. Ultimately, in the following August, the tender of Messrs. Neve for laying the 12-inch main was accepted, and on the 1st of September, 1874, the sewerage works were actually commenced. They had not been long in progress before a dispute arose with the contractors, and a difficulty presented itself in respect of the damage done to Mr. Markillie's property in Norfolk Street East. The Corporation had also been adjudged to pay costs and to divert their drainage, in litigation with Mr. John Baker, as to the Cemetery sewer. The tender of Messrs. Docwra was subsequently accepted for the remainder of the works, and after much delay and difficulty, which necessitated the original estimates being considerably exceeded, the works were practically completed towards the end of 1877, when they were submitted to a preliminary test. The condition

of the main sewer was, however, not satisfactory for some time, and further sums were voted for its cleansing and for improving its ventilation. Considerable alterations have been carried out in recent years, and, although the works have been costly, there is no doubt that the freedom of the borough and the neighbouring parish of Walsoken from serious epidemics is attributable to the more perfect condition of the sanitation of the district and the excellent water-supply. The death-rate may be said to have been reduced at least one-half, from 28 to 14 per thousand, since these public works have been completed, so that but few towns are so well equipped in sanitation, and consequently attractive and desirable to those who are in search of a healthy locality for residence. Dr. Harry Groom, the Medical Officer of Health for the Borough, in referring to this exceptionally low death-rate, says in his report, dated January 26th, 1894:—"The town has been remarkably free from diseases of an infectious or contagious nature. The number of deaths were 180, of these only 133 occurring in the town, 9 in the Hospital, 1 in the Fever Hospital, and 37 in the Workhouse, giving the remarkably low death-rate for the town of 14·2 per 1000, being 19 less than last year and 29 less than during the preceding year." Thirty years ago, in 1864, the deaths were stated by Mr. S. H. Miller, F.R.M.S., in his official Meteorological Report, to be 25 per 1000 and capable of being much reduced by good water and drainage. The effect of the water and drainage works has thus practically reduced the death-rate to the extent of 11 per thousand or over 100 per annum. Improvements have been made by the present Borough Surveyor, Mr. Plowright, in the method of flushing the sewers, in order to prevent accumulation in the pipes, and a new lease has been recently arranged with Mr. Richard Kilham, who occupies the Corporation Sewerage Farm, upon which excellent crops are grown. It may be mentioned that the drainage system in the town on the east and west sides of the river are connected by a syphon under the bed of the river, just above the bridge, and a similar plan has been adopted with regard to the Canal.

There is yet an improvement in the sanitary regulations of Wisbech and Walsoken which might be advantageously carried out. The construction of *abattoirs* or public slaughter-houses, licensed and inspected by the public authorities, would provide sanitary and cleanly offices which would contribute to the health of the district, and facilitate the supervision of the meat prepared for consumption by the inhabitants.

## CHAPTER XII.

IMPROVEMENTS AND PUBLIC WORKS OF THE  
PRESENT CENTURY.

WHALE, seal, and rape oil once cast by turns their dim yellow glimmer from the street lamps of Wisbech, in the days when the old watchmen perambulated the streets, proclaiming to the half-slumbering inhabitants the time of the night and the prospects of the morning. In 1831, a correspondence took place between the Corporation and Mr. Malam, of Holmpton, Yorkshire, an engineer of eminence, who had lighted Kingston-upon-Hull and other populous places. In 1832, during the time that Mr. Henry Ollard was Town Bailiff, a contract was entered into with Mr. Malam, and the foundation stone of the gas works was laid on a site on the Leverington Road, near the General Cemetery. Mrs. Fairey, of Norwich, daughter of the Town Bailiff of that year, remembers her father laying the foundation stone, the event being one of considerable public interest, and directly afterwards, to commemorate the event, a large balloon was sent up from a field exactly opposite. Two people ascended with it, one a man living on the Walsoken Road whose name is not remembered. In the first instance, gas was charged at the rate of 15s. per thousand feet, so that its consumption in those days must have been jealously watched. On December 7th, 1837, a meeting of gas consumers was held in the Town Hall, at which resolutions were passed expressing great dissatisfaction at the high rates charged to consumers, compared



with other towns, such as Leicester, where it was 7s. 6d., or Norwich, in which city the charge was 10s. A committee was appointed with authority to try to induce Mr. Malam to make an alteration in the price. The result of this interview was evidently unfavourable, for in the following January (1838), after communications had been read from Mr. Malam, it was resolved that the consumption should be limited to the least possible amount, and where possible, its use should be discontinued. For several nights together, at the beginning of the winter, in parts of the town there was no gas, and even in commercial establishments business was virtually suspended for want of proper light. No explanation was offered, nor was any reduction made because of the inefficient service and the consequent loss suffered by traders. A requisition drawn up by Mr. Gardiner, who obtained 150 signatures to it, was presented to the Mayor, requesting him to call a meeting to consider the expediency of providing gas-works for the town. In the meantime, the price had come down to 9s. 2d., and subsequently it was lowered to 8s. 4d. and 7s. 6d., according to the quantity consumed.

Mr. George Marshall was the resident manager, and a few facts respecting the works, as they were nearly half-a-century ago, may not be uninteresting. There were 14 retorts, 8 circular ones, made of clay, and 6 elliptical. The amount of gas manufactured was 3,500,000 cubic feet per annum. Coals cost 12s. 6d. per ton, and lime 14s. 6d. per chaldron. Gas was very little used at that time in private houses, and for public lighting purposes there were 95 full lamps, and 72 half-lamps or union jets, the annual cost of which was £280, the contract with the Corporation being for 21 years from the year 1833. Mr. Malam was also the owner of gas works in neighbouring towns, Peterborough, Spalding, Lynn, and Holbeach being among the number. In 1849, the supply was so unsatisfactory that a conference was arranged with Mr. Malam with a view to its improvement, and to obtain better terms. He offered to sell his works but the negotiations came to nothing. Five years later, the proposals were renewed, and in order to indicate their dissatisfaction with the quality of the gas supplied, four representatives of business establishments, having premises on the Market Place, which were almost contiguous, indicated their intention to erect a portable gas manufactory, in order to obtain their own supply and be independent of Mr. Malam. These were Mr. George Dawbarn, Mr. Robert Wherry, Mr. W. Hutchinson and Mr. W. T. Oldham, all subsequently directors of the gas company, of whom Mr. George Dawbarn and

Mr. Hutchinson are now the only survivors. Mr. Malam, however, refused to make any sufficient alteration, beyond that on the renewal of another five years' arrangement the price was reduced to 5s. 10d. In 1857, Mr. Malam intimated that it was his intention to construct new gas works, and a year later, in view of the expiration of the contract in the following year, a meeting was held at the Town Hall, at which it was decided that instead of renewing the arrangement, a gas company should be formed and application made to Parliament for the necessary powers. The Corporation intimated its intention to give every support to the project, and one effect of the new departure was the immediate reduction by Mr. Malam of the price of gas from 5s. 10d. to 5s., accompanied by an intimation of his intention to persist in his own application to Parliament for further powers. The prospectus of the new gas company was issued in November, 1858, under the title of the Wisbech Gas Light and Coke Company, the first shareholders being Messrs. R. Young, G. Dawbarn, J. G. Barley, J. Batterham, J. E. Elvidge, J. Gardiner, A. W. Heald, W. Hutchinson, J. Louth, and W. Louth. The articles of association stated that the capital would be £6,000, that the charge for gas should not exceed 4s. 6d., and should the dividend exceed an average of 8 per cent, the surplus was to be given to the consumers *pro rata*. This was the original intention, but the necessity being thrown upon the company to purchase Mr. Malam's works, involving the doubling of their capital, the directors considered that the altered circumstances justified their departure from these tentative proposals. The company acquired a site in Eastfield, and made other arrangements for commencing operations, when in March, 1859, before the House of Lords' Committee, it was arranged that the new company should purchase Mr. Malam's works at a valuation, and pay £200 towards his Parliamentary expenses. The chief difficulty which the new company anticipated, was that anyone could object to the streets being taken up for the purpose of laying the pipes and, consequently, the promoters were almost compelled to enter into an arrangement with the existing proprietor. In September of that year, the purchase of the works on the Leverington Road was completed and the lighting of the public lamps, which had been suspended, was recommenced, a tender at £2 13s. per lamp having been accepted. At a meeting of the new company on October 24th, 1859, to receive a financial statement, it was stated that the plant had cost £10,530, and that instead of £6,000 capital, £12,000 would be required, 2,500 out of 3,000 shares

having been taken up, and the remainder were to be allotted among existing shareholders. Subsequently, the price of gas to private consumers was fixed at 5s. per thousand, directors were elected and new shares issued. The old works on the Leverington Road were utilised for a time, but ultimately new works and plant were erected in Eastfield, and the old premises were sold, the lofty chimney, which was of an ornamental character, being removed. Into the more recent history of the company it is unnecessary to enter, further than to say that it has proved an exceedingly remunerative undertaking for its promoters, under the guidance of its chairman, Mr. George Dawbarn, and its first manager, Mr. William Horsley. In 1879 application was made to Parliament for additional powers, when its title was changed to that of the Wisbech Lighting Company, and the £2 ordinary shares were increased to the nominal value of £3 without any additional payment being made. It may be explained that the reason for the increase of the nominal value of the shares to £3 was owing to the expenditure from revenue, on capital account, in the early days of the company, the erection of the new works having been largely aided from the current revenue. The directors considering that this outlay should benefit the shareholders who had risked their capital in the undertaking, applied to Parliament to permit this increase of the shares and obtained its authority to do so. Some ordinary stock has recently been sold for £6 each, or double their nominal value, the company having regularly paid good dividends for many years past. According to the detailed statement prepared annually by the Board of Trade, the amount of stock and share capital raised to the end of 1893 was £19,876, the rate of interest paid on stocks and shares being 10 and 6 per cent. During 1893, 29,885 thousand cubic feet of gas were made, and 2,926 tons of coal carbonised—the total receipts from the sale of gas and residuals being £7,493, and the total expenditure £5,704. Private consumers to the number of 833 took 23,232 thousand feet of gas, and the 338 public lamps consumed 4,521 thousand feet—the mains in use for the distribution of gas measuring 11½ miles. The difference between these figures and the total amount made is accounted for by gas consumed on the works and leakage. The plant has of late years been greatly improved and extended, and the net price has recently been reduced to 3s. 7d. It is not only used as an illuminant, but for heating and cooking purposes, as well as a motive power, engines from fourteen-horse power downwards having been lately fixed.

An important project which owed its initiation to Mr. George Dawbarn, was brought before the Corporation in February, 1869, and in the following month, the offer of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to sell 19 acres of land for the purposes of a public Park was discussed by the Corporation. Against this proposal, a strong protest was made by about 100 ratepayers, who signed a memorial against what they deemed to be the unnecessary expenditure of the public money. Nevertheless the Corporation decided, by 15 to 4, to purchase the land, which was most advantageously situated, the Commissioners undertaking to set out the Avenue, 70 feet wide, and plant it with trees. A subscription list was started to assist the project, and no less than £1,105 were subscribed, including donations of £200 from the Duke of Bedford, and Mr. Robert Dawbarn, J.P., £100 from Mr. Wm. Peckover, Mr. Algernon Peckover, and Ald. George Dawbarn, £50 from Ald. Young, £40 from Ald. Bays, and £25 from Miss Trafford-Southwell, and Mr. J. Gardiner. The total cost of conveyance, compensation to the tenant (Mr. Mackman), fencing, gates, laying out, &c., amounted to about £3,769, of which sum the land cost £2,400. The Mayor and Corporation planted trees in the Park the day after the election of Ald. Wherry as Mayor, in November, 1869, and the Avenue was planted by contributors to the subscription list. Messrs. H. and F. Sharpe were most liberal benefactors in the preparing and planting of the ground.

Consequent upon the opening of the Park, other developments followed. The estate laid out by Mr. F. C. Southwell and Mr. Mumford, resulted in the erection of a large number of commodious residences, the opening of new roads, including the Clarkson Avenue, and a material increase of the rateable value of the borough. By the munificence of Miss Trafford-Southwell, an owner of large estates in the locality, a philanthropic institution of great value to the district was provided. In October, 1871, a public meeting was held at Wisbech to consider Miss Southwell's offer to erect a building to benefit the poor of Wisbech, and it was resolved that her generous proposal should be cordially accepted. A Cottage Hospital was suggested as the most desirable and most needed public institution. Miss Trafford-Southwell accepted the suggestion and carried out her intention in the most munificent manner. The foundation stone was laid a year later, during Ald. Ford's mayoralty, with due ceremonial, a display of fireworks in the evening, which took place in the Recreation Ground or Park, provided at Miss Southwell's own cost, com-

memorating the event. The inscription on the foundation stone was as follows:—

This stone was laid on the 16th of October, 1872, by  
**MARGARET ELIZABETH,**  
 Elder daughter of SIGISMUND TRAFFORD-SOUTHWELL, Esq.  
 She founded this Hospital  
 To the praise and glory of God,  
 And for the benefit of the Sick and Poor,  
 and appointed as Trustees  
**ALEXANDER PECKOVER.**                      **FRANCIS JACKSON.**  
**ROBERT WHERRY.**                         **REV. JOHN SCOTT, M.A.**

The opening took place on the 2nd of October, 1873, when a procession of Volunteers, Friendly Societies, and public bodies was organised and a luncheon provided at the Corn Exchange. Miss Southwell not only erected, furnished and fitted the building with beds for 26 patients, and every requisite appliance at a cost of about £8,000, even to the necessary surgical instruments, but also generously endowed it with £6,000. Mr. William Peckover, Mr. Algernon Peckover, and other members of the family contributed handsomely to the endowment fund, bringing it up to £10,000, and there have been frequent contributors during the 23 years that it has been opened. Legacies have been left by Mr. William Peckover, Mr. Algernon Peckover, Mr. Jonathan Peckover and many others. The Lord Lieutenant of Cambs. (Mr. Alexander Peckover, LL.D.), and the Misses Peckover have been most generous in aiding important improvements, the most recent gift having been one of £500 by Mr. Peckover, to enable the committee to carry out the sanitation of the building on the most modern and approved principles, under the direction of Mr. J. F. Woods, New Bond Street, London, architect to Guy's Hospital, and Mr. W. H. Davis, of Wisbech. Under the management of the Trustees and Committee, the Hospital has been one of the most beneficent and valued institutions of Wisbech, conferring great advantages upon an area within a radius of about 10 miles from Wisbech. Although it is exclusively for in-patients and no outpatient system or dispensary has yet been associated with it, a separate scheme has been originated by the Mayor (Mr. A. W. May), by which the services of a district nurse from the Victoria Jubilee Institute has been secured, in order to minister to the needs of the sick and suffering of all classes, but chiefly to the poor and necessitous. This scheme is under the management of a local committee, representing religious bodies, friendly societies, and other organizations which contribute to the expenses. A



**OPENING OF WISBECH WATERWORKS BY LORD ROBERT MONTAGU. FOUNTAIN ON THE MARKET PLACE.**  
*From Photo by E. Johnson.*



**OPENING OF THE NORTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE HOSPITAL BY MISS TRAFFORD-SOUTHWELL,  
 THE FOUNDER AND BENEFACTOR.**  
*From Photo by E. Johnson.*



**THE NORTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE HOSPITAL AND PUBLIC PARK, WISBECH.**  
*From Photo by J. Kennerell.*



Benevolent Fund has also been raised by subscriptions, obtained by a canvass of the town, which is to be applied in furnishing nutriment or other aid to necessitous cases. There is every reason to believe that this organization, known as the "Wisbech District Nursing Association," will prove a very valuable means of relieving those who need that medical aid should be supplemented by nutritious food and skilful nursing.

The events associated with the River Works, Dock Schemes, Drainage Works, and other similar undertakings promoted by the Corporation embrace a large portion of the history of that body, but there are other developments which ought not to be passed over in silence. So far back as in February, 1855, a meeting of parishioners was held to consider the Home Secretary's order to close for interments, the parish church, the churchyard adjoining the same, the cholera ground in the Cemetery, the burial grounds of Ely Place Chapel, Unitarian Chapel, and Chapel of Ease and the vaults of the latter, except in metal coffins. This was carrying into effect part of the recommendation made by Mr. W. Lee, C.E., in 1850, in which he urged that "considering the general condition of the burial grounds attached to the various places of worship, and the fact that several of them have been already voluntarily closed, from a conviction of their crowded condition, and also the excellent provision made in the Church Cemetery and the General Cemetery, I think that the burial grounds in the town should be immediately closed by legal authority, so that no more interments of the dead should take place in the midst of the living population." A memorial was adopted asking the Home Secretary to modify these regulations, but it was met by an official refusal. The effect of this order was to limit burials to the Church Cemetery, adjoining the Vicarage, and to the General Cemetery on the Leverington Road. At a subsequent vestry meeting, in June of the same year, the Home Secretary's order was further considered, and it was there stated that the unoccupied part of the Church Cemetery would last but six years and that a Burial Board would then become necessary. About 1,900 grave spaces were left, and it was maintained by some that a Burial Ground should be provided by the parish. At an adjourned meeting on the 31st of July, Mr. George Dawbarn proposed an amendment postponing the matter for two years, and it was passed by 43 against 18. The Rev. W. B. Hopkins, the Vicar, adjourned the meeting for the purpose of taking a poll at the Exchange Hall, which was done, when the voting was as follows:—For Mr. George Dawbarn's amendment 296; against



194; majority for, 102. The question appears to have lain dormant, not for two years only, but for nearly 22, for it was not until September, 1877, that the Local Board of Health decided to purchase the new burial ground near Mount Pleasant Bank for £2,250. A vestry meeting, held a short time before, had represented that there was an immediate necessity for the provision of an additional place of burial, and it was stated that the Church Cemetery would be filled up in three years, as there were only 400 spaces left, and they were burying at the rate of 150 each year. It was ordered by the Corporation that the Privy Council should be petitioned to vest the Town Council, as a Burial Board, with powers to provide a cemetery under the Burial Act of 1854. This authorization was received, and subsequently a loan of £6,000 was applied for to defray the cost of erecting the curator's lodge, a shelter in which services could be held, for laying out, fencing and planting the ground, and other necessary expenses. The Burial Board, after considerable debate, decided that no distinction should be made between consecrated and unconsecrated ground, and as no consecration ceremonial was performed by the Bishop of Ely, there are not the usual limitations or differences as to the burial of Churchmen and Nonconformists, which are happily obliterated by the enlightened action of the Board in this matter. The first interment took place on April 20th, 1881, but it was not formally opened until the 31st October, the Church Cemetery being simultaneously closed for interments, except in reserved portions. The Borough Cemetery has been described as a model cemetery in certain respects, as will be seen by the following reference which appeared in one of the London daily journals soon after it was opened:—

The Borough of Wisbech has lately purchased a cemetery and the Corporation, acting as the Wisbech Burial Board, is carrying out the arrangements connected with its administration on enlightened lines, which are worthy of imitation elsewhere. It is used by the inhabitants of all classes and denominations. There has been no consecration of the ground, and no separation into Church and Nonconformist portions. There are no chapels, but a comfortable waiting room, with seats and a reading desk, has been provided for shelter against unfavourable weather. In some cases, the funeral procession stops at one of the churches on the way to the cemetery, but these cases are exceptions. There has not been the slightest discord in reference to these arrangements. The Mayor, Mr. W. M. Rust, is one of the churchwardens, and it is very much owing to his truly liberal feeling in the matter that this happy state of things exists here.

The General Cemetery on the Leverington Road originated in

1835. At that time, the churchyard was becoming filled up, and three of the Nonconformist bodies, the Wesleyans, Independents, and Primitive Methodists had no burial grounds of their own, while the Baptists' and Society of Friends' graveyards were very circumscribed. About  $3\frac{1}{2}$  acres of land was purchased by Mr. Rumball, near the Leverington Road toll-bar for £950, and disposed of in shares of £5 each, the property being vested in 21 trustees and enrolled in the High Court of Chancery. The first interment took place on March 25th, 1836, and in 1848, a chapel and lodge, from Mr. Wm. Adams' designs, were erected. Messrs. Josiah Rumball, Stephen Stanton, George Marshall, Thomas Dawbarn (Chairman of the Board), Walter Reeve, and Rev. Wm. Holmes were among the active promoters of the undertaking. The ground is dry at eight or nine feet depth, and is tastefully laid out and planted. A large map drawn by Mr. Kerridge, surveyor, shows the graves, with corresponding numbers. Of late years it has been much enlarged and improved, and the Board of Directors has still unoccupied ground available, which can be added when necessary. A large number of interments take place annually in this pleasantly-situated and well-kept place of interment.

In addition to extensive paving works, carried out at a cost of £2,600, the making of new streets, and similar improvements, the purchase of a steam fire-engine as a protection from fire in the Borough, was accelerated by serious conflagrations that had taken place on Mr. Whitehead's and Mr. Lane's premises, resulting in considerable destruction of property and imminent danger to the town as a whole. The Town Council had in November, 1877, after visiting Littleport and March to inspect similar appliances, recommended the purchase of a steam fire engine at a cost of £650, but the Council did not then adopt the proposal, and referred it back to the committee for further information. Up to this time, Wisbech had enjoyed an immunity from serious fires, and the manual engines, which were exercised quarterly, appeared sufficient. In 1850, the Government Inspector reported that he had not met with any provincial town where the machinery and appointments were so efficient, but the deficiency of water, which in the centre of the town was only obtainable from cisterns, was then a serious drawback. The water supply, and fixing of hydrants, although the pressure was not obtainable at first at night, considerably minimized this danger, and now that there is a constant supply, the arrangements are as efficient as any town of its size. The matter remained in abeyance until the end of

1884, when the fire already alluded to, took place in Mr. Whitehead's timber yard, near the Sessions House, causing about £1,500 damage, followed by the destruction of Mr. Jermyn's premises at Lynn, and early on New Year's morning another large fire, also previously referred to, broke out, causing the destruction of the ironmongery establishment of Mr. W. Lane, Market Place. The purchase of a steam fire-engine had been previously advocated in the local press, and the same day that Mr. Lane's fire occurred, and almost as soon as it was extinguished, a committee of the Council met and resolved to purchase a steam fire-engine at a cost of £800. The contract with Messrs. Shand and Mason was signed next month and on March 18th, 1895, the engine was started by the Mayoress (Mrs. Peatling), and named "The Etty" after that lady. The Town Brigade, for some time, continued its services, but quite recently a Volunteer Fire Brigade has been formed, composed of young men who give their services, and are exercised under the direction of Captain Plowright, the Borough Surveyor.

The opening of the Cattle Market took place on April 1st, 1869, by the Mayor (Ald. Wherry). Provision was made for about 400 cattle, 1,400 sheep, 20 calves, and 500 pigs. The work was carried out under the superintendence of Mr. Chas. Mumford, the Borough Surveyor, the brickwork and asphaltting being contracted for by Mr. Jones, Melton Mowbray, for £1,199, and Messrs. Mellard and F. C. Southwell, of Rugeley, undertook the ironwork for £497, the total cost being about £2,300. The event was celebrated by a dinner at the White Lion Hotel, under the presidency of the Mayor (Ald. Wherry), at which it was suggested that an effort should be made in the interest of the farmers to obtain the abolition of the toll-bars by which Wisbech was completely hemmed in, a suggestion which has now been fully carried out.

Immediately opposite the Clarkson Memorial, a new Post Office was erected and opened on the 1st of February, 1887, having been built by the Government for the more convenient accommodation of the rapidly growing postal and telegraph services. When half-a-century ago, eightpence, ninepence, and sometimes fourteenpence were paid for the postage of a letter, deliveries were few and often irregular. The first Post Office was at one time in Upper Hill Street, afterwards in Market Street, and for many years in Union Street, on the premises forming part of the *Advertiser* Office. Later it was situated on the Cornhill, adjacent to the Stone Bridge, and was pulled down

when that bridge was removed in order to widen the Cornhill approach. The next site was on the South Brink, then on the Market Place on the premises now occupied by Messrs. Freeman, Hardy and Willis, a temporary arrangement during the erection of the present Office, and finally in the present convenient building in Bridge Street, erected in 1886, and opened in the Jubilee Year of Queen Victoria. The town is to be congratulated upon the architectural merits of the building, which is gracefully designed in the French Mediæval Domestic style, and with great general convenience of arrangement—an amazing improvement upon the various previous lodgings devoted to the local postal service. One might travel far through the United Kingdom before meeting, in a town of the size of Wisbech, with so handsome and commodious a Post Office. The opening was celebrated by the Postmaster (Mr. John Goward) giving a banquet to the Mayor and Corporation and a few friends at the Rose and Crown Hotel, the first letter in the new Office having been previously posted by Miss Maud Mason.

The Jubilee of the Penny Postage scheme devised by Rowland Hill was made the opportunity of paying a well-desired compliment to the Wisbech Postmaster and his staff. On January 21st, 1890, a committee of gentlemen arranged a complimentary banquet to the Postmaster, who was at that time Mayor of Wisbech, and to the officials, at the Town Hall. A handsome invitation card was sent to each of the 140 bidden guests, and a commemorative design was formally presented to the Mayor, as a memento of an event that was memorable in the Post Office calendar throughout the country. Mr. Goward retired from the Postmastership in March, 1893, and was presented on the 5th of May with a testimonial, consisting of a silver salver, framed portrait of the Postmaster in his Mayoral robes, and an illuminated address, by the staff, as a recognition of his 48 years' service. The appointment of Postmaster had been in Mr. Goward's family for three generations. Mr. Goward and his father had served in the Post Office for more than a century, and Mr. Goward, senior, who was Postmaster for 53½ years, was preceded in the duties by his mother, Postmistresses being appointed in those days, as the duties were very light. Of late years, the departments of the Post Office have greatly increased, and the combining of telegraphic, savings' bank, insurance, issue of licenses and stamps, and other branches of service, in addition to the great increase of postal communications, has made the position of Postmaster increasingly responsible. Mr. Goward was

succeeded in the Postmastership by Mr. Freeman, who has further improved the excellent service which the public have received during recent years.

The superseding of the mail-cart to March by the night mail train may be mentioned among the improvements of recent years, and the frequent incoming and outgoing mails, as well as the provision of receiving houses and wall boxes have greatly contributed to the public convenience. Few towns are better equipped in postal and telegraphic matters, and it only needs that telephonic communication should be established, in order to complete an efficient system of inter-communications. The National Telephone Company, which has a branch at Cambridge, has already been in correspondence with commercial firms on this subject, and probably such communications will, ere long, become *un fait accompli*.

The Banks occupy an important place in the business life of a community, and a few words respecting them may find a place in this chapter. Macaulay tells us that, so recently as 1685, every trader had his own strong box in his own house, and when an acceptance was presented to him, he told down the crowns and caroluses on his own counter. Now, almost everyone "keeps a banker" or rather, perhaps, is "kept" by him, and greater facilities are necessary for the safe and ready discharge of such responsibilities as may be cast upon them. Like Tellson and Company's Bank in the *Tale of Two Cities*, Messrs. Gurney's, on the North Brink premises, which adjoined Bank House, soon became "very small," as well as "very incommodious." This Bank had been established for 114 years, having been founded in Wisbech in 1782 by Mr. Jonathan Peckover (grandfather of Mr. Alexander Peckover), who was born at Fakenham and settled here in 1777. It was opened in 1782 in High Street, on the premises now occupied by Mr. G. Hayward, and its growth necessitated its removal to a building on the North Brink, adjoining Bank House, which has since been pulled down. Mr. Peckover died in 1833, leaving two sons in the Bank, William and Algernon. Mr. William Peckover died in 1877, and in the following year the erection of a new Bank was undertaken upon a site in the Old Market, formerly occupied by Mr. Wm. Exley's granary. The foundations on the river side were made exceptionally secure with piling and concrete, and a substantial and well lighted building was erected from the designs of Mr. E. Boardman, of Norwich, by Messrs. Girling and Son, of Wisbech. The banking room is 35 feet square and 20 feet high, handsomely furnished,

and the strong rooms are fitted with Hobbs' fire and burglar proof doors or wicket gates, the large room being 14 feet by 13 feet and 10 feet high. A roof-raising dinner was given to the employés and workmen at the Institute Hall, on the 7th of August, 1878, and the Bank was opened to the public in April, 1879. Mr. Jonathan Peckover, the younger, died in 1882. Mr. Algernon Peckover retired from active partnership in 1892, and on his appointment as Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, Mr. Alexander Peckover withdrew from the firm. The Bank has its branches at Chatteris, Whittlesey, March, Holbeach, Long Sutton and Sutton Bridge. Originally the members of the firm were Daniel Gurney, Henry Birkbeck, William Peckover, Algernon Peckover, Alexander Peckover, Jonathan Peckover, and Samuel Gurney Buxton. But since Mr. Alexander Peckover's retirement, the firm was known by the name of Gurney, Birkbeck, Barclay and Buxton. In May, 1896, it became known that a number of private Banks were about to be amalgamated and formed into a joint stock company, under the title of Barclay and Co., Limited. On the 10th of June, the official announcement was made by each Bank to their respective clients, and it was intimated that the new company would have a capital of £6,000,000, of which £5,000,000 would be issued and subscribed; £2,000,000 to be paid up, and £1,000,000 provided as a reserve fund. The banks included in this combination were as follows:—Barclay, Bevan, Tritton, Ransom, Bouverie and Co., London and Brighton; Goslings and Sharpe, London; Gurney and Co., Norwich, Fakenham, Halesworth, King's Lynn, Wisbech, and Great Yarmouth; Gurneys, Alexander and Co., Ipswich; Gurneys, Round and Co., Colchester; J. Backhouse and Co., Darlington; Bassett, Son, and Harris, Bedfordshire Leighton Buzzard Bank; Fordham, Gibson and Co., Royston; Gibson, Tuke, and Gibson, Saffron Walden and North Essex Bank; Molineux, Whitfield, and Co., Old Bank, Lewes; J. Mortlock and Co., Limited, Cambridge; Sharples, Tuke, Lucas, and Seeborn, Hitchin; Sparrow, Tuffnell and Co., Essex Bank, Chelmsford, and Braintree; Veasey, Desborough, Bevan, Tillard and Co., Huntingdon Town and County Bank; Woodall, Hebden and Co., Scarborough Old Bank.

The new directors of Barclay and Co., Limited, are as follow:—Francis Augustus Bevan, chairman, Lombard Street; Samuel Gurney Buxton, vice-chairman; Edmund Backhouse, Darlington; Hugh Gurney Barclay, Norwich; Robert Barclay, Lombard Street; Francis Bassett, Leighton Buzzard; Wilfrid Arthur Bevan, Lombard Street; Edward Lewis Birkbeck,

Norwich; Henry Birkbeck, Norwich; Geoffrey F. Buxton, Norwich; Edmund B. Gibson, Saffron Walden; Francis Gosling, Fleet Street; Herbert Gosling, Fleet Street; Lord Kinnaid, Pall Mall East; Edward B. Mounsey, Darlington; Chas. T. Murdoch, M.P., Pall Mall East; Edward Henry Parker, Cambridge; Frederick Seebohm, Hitchin; Joseph H. Tritton, Lombard Street; Francis B. Whitfield, Lewes; Robert Woodhouse, Chelmsford; Frederic C. Goodenough, secretary. It was stated that by this fusion, Barclay and Co. would control deposits of about 24½ millions, and more than one-fourth of the entire authorised private bank note issues now remaining would be swept away. The Bank of England would have the right to apply for an Order in Council to permit it to increase its fiduciary note issue by two-thirds of these lapsed issues of private banks.

In this connection it may be noted that the stoppage of a bank took place in Wisbech some 70 years ago. The circumstances are referred to in the *Star of the East*, of which Mr. Jas. Hill was the editor. He had previously been a banker and corn merchant, and during a financial crisis, arising out of the speculative character of the corn trade, the bank was compelled to suspend payment. The firm was carried on under the name of James and Thomas Hill, of Wisbech and Peterboro', each having said to have started in life with £30,000. Mr. Hill's house on the South Brink, which was then known as the Bank House, has a history that may be worth recording. It was once occupied by Sir Philip Vavasour, High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire, who was knighted in 1761, when he went to London to present an address from this county to George III after his coronation. At that time, the three houses into which it is now divided, occupied by Miss Goward, Mrs. Gardiner, and Mr. T. P. Maxey, formed one residence, with a spacious staircase, which still remains, and a large wainscotted dining room, having handsomely carved mantel-pieces, two of which are in existence in the centre house. Unfortunately there came a time (1825), possibly within the memory of some living, that the bank doors were closed, with a notice posted outside, which attracted an excited crowd of people who demanded their deposits.\* Mr. Hill having received some anonymous letters in

\* Mr. Boultee, corn merchant and banker, in the Old Market, was stated to have had a bushel screwed to his counter, the wrong way upwards, and its bottom covered with gold (sovereigns or guineas) which he asked a strong man to lift. Of course he could not do so, and the people consequently thought it must be filled with gold, and some of them were satisfied. It is also said that during the "run on the banks" about this time (1825 or 1826) a Mr. Charrington, a wealthy man residing in Fleet Fen, near Gedney Hill, went to Messrs. Peckovers' bank

reference to this incident, when he afterwards edited the *Star in the East*, took the opportunity of explaining the position of matters at that time. He writes :—

In 1825, I was in addition to being a merchant, a partner in a banking house, and at the close of that year one of those great convulsions in the money transactions of the country to which our imperfect monetary system is periodically subject, came like an earthquake, sweeping off banking establishments which had stood the storms of half-a-century. The first bursting of the shock fell upon the house of Wentworth and Co., in Yorkshire. What the Gurneys are now thought to be in Norfolk, the Wentworths were then thought to be in Yorkshire, but they suddenly stopped payment. At that time, I held and was liable for paper of their house to the amount of £14,000. The shock was a severe one, but I made head against it, and had that been the extent of the mischief, should easily have surmounted it. But the storm gathered, five London banking houses, including our own agents, were brought to a stand; about one hundred country bankers fell victims to the calamity and merchants and traders innumerable. It happened that the house of Gurneys and Co. the old Wisbech Bank, after a great effort,\* obtained sufficient aid from the Bank of England to enable them to stand their ground, and consequently it happened that the Wisbech merchants who banked with them stood also. The stoppage of our banking house and our mercantile concern, when the other bank and the other merchants did not stop, was an opportunity not to be lost for misrepresenting me, but I was there on the day of trial to meet the creditors, and although every possible channel of information was searched, all expressed entire satisfaction in my honour, and not one of them withheld from executing the documents declaring my innocence. A dividend was paid, but I may add that one article of merchandise held by our firm at that time (rape-seed) would within two years afterwards have realized £20,000 more than it was sold for by the assignees, a sum more than adequate to have covered the deficiency.

There was an amusing incident in connection with this examination of the affairs of the Bank. Rumours spread that a large iron chest had been removed surreptitiously from the Bank, which was asserted to contain gold that had been secretly kept back. After obtaining information as to its whereabouts from a discharged servant, and great trouble had been taken to trace the

on the North Brink, with a view to drawing his cash but hardly liked to make known his wish, so asked for a part, when Mr. Wm. Peckover said "Thee can have it all, if thee likes," which so satisfied him that he said "No, you may keep it."

\* This is not quite accurate. Messrs. Gurney and Peckovers' Bank had sufficient resources without appealing to the Bank of England. Mr. William Peckover posted up at once to London, and returned with ample supplies for his customers.



treasure box, it was at last produced in court, and although only a wooden chest, it proved very heavy, the anticipations of the value of its contents being correspondingly increased. It was opened in breathless silence and found to contain, not gold, but a collection of fossils belonging to one of the ladies of the household! Mr. Hill came out of the ordeal without any imputation on his honour, and subsequently re-embarked in business, but was not successful as a merchant and removed to London, where he followed journalism.

The National Provincial Bank of England has also a branch at Wisbech, of which Mr. Turner is the manager. The Wisbech Trustee Savings Bank, after rendering useful service for many years in this neighbourhood, has ceased to exist and the deposits have been transferred to the banks referred to, or the Post Office Savings Bank. Messrs. Lacons, Youell and Kemp have recently opened a branch in the Old Market on Thursdays and Saturdays.

## CHAPTER XIII.

PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS—THE WISBECH MUSEUM  
AND LITERARY SOCIETY. THE WORKING MEN'S CLUB  
AND INSTITUTE.

IN its educational institutions, Wisbech has some exceptional advantages. Mr. Llewellyn Jewitt, F.S.A., in the *Art Journal* some years ago, wrote—“There exists here a Museum that for its excellent and liberal management and for the value and beauty of its contents, can successfully vie with many of the larger and more imposing-looking of its provincial brethren, and which may in many respects be advantageously taken as a model by institutions of larger and older growth.” There is also another institution which has frequently been similarly quoted as deserving of emulation by other towns—the Working Men's Club and Institute, and to these two distinctive organizations in Wisbech, characteristic of the administrative energy and good management of some of its citizens, a chapter may be reasonably devoted, in order to trace their origin, their progress, and those conspicuous features which have contributed to their development and usefulness. In both societies, the help generously given by members of the Peckover family to educational movements of this character has largely contributed to their advancement and to their present satisfactory position.

The Wisbech Museum and the Literary Society, which have been amalgamated since 1877, were prior to that time distinct organizations. The Literary Society is more than a century old, having been founded in 1781, as the result of a private meeting which was held at the house of Mr. Jonathan Peckover, grand-

father of the present Lord Lieutenant. The original note, conveying an invitation to certain gentlemen to meet at the Rose and Crown Hotel, to establish "a well-chosen library on a permanent and increasing plan," was dated March 29th, 1781, and signed by the following gentlemen:—Thomas Sheepshanks, a relative of the former owner of the Sheepshanks' collection at the South Kensington Museum; Mann Hutchesson, once Town Bailiff of Wisbech; John Hancock, a member of the Society of Friends; and Jonathan Peckover, founder of the banking firm. There were about eighty subscribers early in the present century, and the Rev. Jeremiah Jackson (father of Mr. Francis Jackson, the Town Clerk), whose exceedingly fine portrait by J. P. Knight, R.A., hangs in the library, was President from 1804 to 1824, when he was succeeded by Mr. Wm. Watson, F.S.A. At that time the library consisted of 2,500 volumes, and a room was appropriated for reading in the house of the librarian.

The Wisbech Museum originated in 1835, through the exertions of a few gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood. The Rev. Henry Fardell, at that time Vicar of Wisbech, was its first President, and its founders were the Revs. H. Fardell and Jeremiah Jackson, Messrs. William and Algernon Peckover, Charles Metcalfe, Hugh Jackson, J. R. Weatherhead, and some others. The earliest subscribers and contributors included Dr. W. Stanger, Messrs. I. Jecks, J. Maule, W. G. Townley, James Usill, Steed Girdlestone, R. F. Pate, H. M. Usill, John Taylor, Thomas Stear, Abraham Usill, J. G. Kelk, R. Cross, M. Leach, W. G. Jackson, C. Jecks, Frederick Trevor, G. M. Lefevre, E. Jackson, T. Orton, S. Stanton, Dr. Fraser, Rev. E. Bates, Mrs. Fardell, Messrs. Robert Dawbarn, J. R. Christopherson, W. Wales, F. Fawssett, J. Bellamy, and W. Grounds. The Museum was originally located in two rooms in the Old Market (at the back of Mr. George Snarey's shop) hired for the purpose, and when the Countess of Hardwicke laid the foundation stone of the Church Cemetery Chapel (a grand bazaar being held in the Vicarage Grounds on the occasion), we are told that "the Museum in the Old Market was open to the public at a small charge, and numbers who availed themselves of the opportunity of visiting it, were pleased with the collection which, if not extensive, is an interesting one. Amongst the curiosities collected is the saw of the largest sword fish ever captured, taken at Trinidad, 25 feet long, weighing five tons and requiring 100 men to land it." In 1841, Mr. Thomas W. Foster was appointed resident curator and held that post until 1874, when he was succeeded by Mr.

G. E. Cooke, and afterwards in 1877 by Mr. George Oliver, the present curator. When Mr. Foster assumed its care, the collection had so increased that five years later, the Literary Society purchased part of Mr. Hardwicke's garden, adjoining the churchyard, and entered into a contract for the erection of a suitable building for the Museum, as well as the Literary Society, from designs of Messrs. Buckler, of London, the tender of Messrs. Forman and Frow for £2,405 being accepted. The cost was met by the issue of 100 shares of £25 each, and the trustees of the Museum paid a rent to the Literary Society for the use of the building. The opening of the Museum took place on July 27th, 1847, when Major General Sir Harry Smith, Bart., C.B., Governor of the Cape of Good Hope and a native of Whittlesey, accompanied by Lady Smith, were entertained at the Vicarage by the Rev. H. Fardell, the President. The event was a notable one, the hero of Aliwal, as Sir Harry Smith was called, in recognition of his victory as commander in that battle and his general military prowess, being received by the Mayor (Ald. Stevens) and the Corporation. An address was presented to General and Lady Smith, and at the inaugural proceedings the learned Professor Sedgwick, who occupied the Geological Chair at Cambridge University, delivered a scientific address. The guests who were present included Dean Peacock, of Ely, Lord George Manners, the Hon. Eliot Yorke, Mr. Algernon Peckover and family. A banquet followed at the Girls' National School, attended by a large company of ladies and gentlemen. Sir Harry Smith, in responding to the toast of the health of his esteemed lady, referred to the devotion with which Lady Smith had followed him through the horrors of the battle field, and by her courage as well as her sympathetic help to the wounded, had earned the warmest gratitude of the men under his command.

The amalgamation of the Museum and Literary Societies was effected in 1877, and through the munificence of the President at that time, Mr. Algernon Peckover, who placed £1,000 at its disposal, aided by the generosity of many of the shareholders who parted with their shares gratuitously, the trustees became sole owners of the property. In 1887, the Jubilee year of Her Majesty, the library was extended, giving increased accommodation and adding to the completeness of the building, a cheque of over £350 being presented by the same President, who had previously contributed for the purpose of defraying the cost of this building.

In 1854, on the death of the Rev. Henry Fardell, Mr. Wm. Peckover, F.S.A., was elected President and continued in that

office until 1869, when, on his retirement, his brother, Mr. Algernon Peckover, F.L.S., succeeded to the chair, which he held for nearly a quarter of a century, until his death in December, 1893. His only surviving son, the present Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, Mr. Alexander Peckover, LL.D., has since occupied the Presidency, being the third member of the family who has held that office during a period of 41 years. The Peckover family, indeed, have been among the chief benefactors to the Museum and Library, and to the interest they have taken in its advancement and enlargement, the institution owes its high position among provincial museums. The Rev. H. Fardell, Dr. Stanger, Admiral Spelman Swaine, Mr. Ellis, Missionary in Madagascar and the Pacific Islands, and many others, have contributed to the collection in the Museum. The objects of interest connected with the cruel slave trade, collected by Mr. Thomas Clarkson, the anti-slavery advocate, and exhibited by him before the Privy Council on their inquiry into that subject in 1788, were presented to the Museum by Mrs. Dickerson, of Wolverton, his niece and daughter-in-law, through Mr. J. Clarkson Maynard, who was then resident in Wisbech. These consist of handloom, textile and leather fabrics, weapons, instruments of torture, &c. But the great charm of the Museum is to be found in the valuable bequest of the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend, an owner of property in the neighbourhood of Wisbech, who died at Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1868, and left a valuable collection of ceramics, bijouterie and articles of *vertu*. The bulk of these unique objects, including 3,000 coins in gold, silver, and copper, and about 6,000 volumes of books, came to Wisbech with the stipulation that they should never be disposed of. The bequest is made in the following terms:—

I give and bequeath all the rest of my pictures, and water coloured drawings and engravings, and my coins, and all other my books and my original sketches and my fossils, autographs, rings set with jewels intended to illustrate my geological collections, and my collection of dried plants, and all other my effects coming under the denomination of "Curiosities," "Objects of Antiquity," or "Vertu," to the Trustees or Directors for the time being of the Wisbech Museum, established at Wisbech aforesaid, on condition that the same several articles be never sold or exchanged, but deposited and kept in the same Museum for ever under proper regulations, and exhibited to the public for the advantage of the town and neighbourhood.

By his will, South Kensington was entitled to such of his pictures and water-colour drawings as the President might select,

his collection of Swiss coins, box of precious stones, cameos, and also the ancient gold watch which was stolen by the notorious Barrington and was the cause of his transportation. The rest of his pictures, curiosities, objects of antiquity or vertu he left to Wisbech Museum. A legacy of £2,000 was bequeathed to Charles Dickens, his literary executor, his gold watch to Lady Burdett Coutts (who visited the Museum in 1869), and another gold repeater to his son, Charles Dickens. The residue of his property was wisely and generously left for the foundation and support of free schools, in or near London, at which education of the very simplest and humblest kind was to be given.

Such were the principal provisions of a will which greatly enriched the Wisbech Museum. Some may feel surprised that so choice a gift, representing a monetary value of several thousand pounds, should have been made to a comparatively small provincial museum, but it is accounted for by the fact that the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend visited the Museum on two or three occasions, and was so agreeably surprised with the order and intelligent arrangement of the objects, that he forwarded a donation of some curious birds' nests. Not long afterwards, his death revealed the fact of this large bequest, which was given free of legacy duty. Miss (now the Baroness) Burdett Coutts, with Mr. Helmore, the executors, took great interest in the selection of the objects intended for Wisbech, and Mr. Alexander Peckover was invited to visit Miss Burdett Coutts to assist in the choice. Although South Kensington Museum was exceedingly anxious to possess some of the more valuable *objets d'art* bequeathed to Wisbech, a most equitable disposition was made to this Museum in accordance with the terms of the will. It may indeed, be mentioned that the Museum is indebted to Lady Burdett Coutts for the considerate manner in which the testator's wishes with regard to the Wisbech bequest were carried out. A considerable sum of money was spent in providing cases, which were subscribed for by the directors and others, and the Museum was considerably enlarged. When the collection had been deposited and arranged in the building, a visit was paid by Mr. Llewellyn Jewitt, F.S.A., who contributed a series of articles to the *Art Journal* in April, 1872, descriptive of "the Museums of England with special reference to Objects of Art and Antiquity." Those referring to Wisbech Museum are so admirably described and illustrated that we have obtained the permission of the publishers to reproduce them here:—

The museum is situated in that strange and very singular district known as "The Fens," a tract of country of immense extent, where hill and valley are alike absent; where the eye traverses an almost unbroken horizon on all sides; where the whole surface of the earth is, as it has been said, "flat as a pancake," dotted here and there only with a small town, village, hamlet, or homestead; and where long straight lines of "dykes," each many miles in length, without a bend or a turning, intersect the country like so many huge canals filled with stagnant water, yet having neither towing-paths nor boats; but which, nevertheless, has its own peculiar beauties and advantages, such as the residents therein would be loth to exchange for those of more mountainous and wooded districts. We all know how truly delicious are fen-partridges, how excellent are fen-geese and fen-ducks, and how good and rich is fen cream-cheese; but we do *not* all know that in the very midst of this country of dykes and corn and geese, there exists a Museum that for its excellent and liberal management, and for the value and beauty of its contents, can successfully vie with many of the larger and more imposing-looking of its provincial brethren; and which may in many respects be advantageously taken as a model by institutions of a larger and older growth. It is my pleasant duty this time, therefore, to write of the Wisbech Museum and its varied and matchless contents.

The Museum was established in 1835, through the exertions of a few gentlemen of Wisbech; the late Rev. Henry Fardell, then Vicar of the Parish, being its first President. It was originally located in the house, hired for the purpose, but which, as the Museum grew, was found too small for its requirements. In 1841, a resident curator was appointed, and five years later the collections had so increased that a site adjoining the churchyard and near the Castle was purchased, and the present building erected, the cost being defrayed by shares. In 1854, on the death of the Vicar, Mr. William Peckover, F.S.A., was elected President, and so continued until 1869, when on his retirement, his brother, Mr. Algernon Peckover, F.L.S., succeeded to the office. It is open during certain hours every day, except Sunday and on Bank Holidays.

The collection contained in the Museum is varied in character, and embraces almost every branch of study, and the whole is admirably arranged, and kept by its excellent curator, Mr. Foster, with a scrupulous attention to order and cleanliness which might well be copied by other museums, and which reflects the highest credit upon the executive of the institution.

Before proceeding to the Art-collections it will be well, briefly, to allude to the other departments of study, which are so worthily represented in this Museum. In British ornithology, the collection of birds is nearly complete, and all the local specimens are specially labelled; the collection of fen-birds being particularly rich and rare. The collection of marine and fresh-water fishes taken in and at the mouth of the river Nene at the Wash, is also very extensive and curious; as is likewise the assemblage of British land and fresh-water shells, of which only seven species

are wanting in the Museum. Among the former an enormous opah or king-fish, caught at Hunstanton, in 1839, is especially deserving of notice. Among the other piscatorial specimens is the largest saw of a saw-fish in existence—the fish from which it was taken 25 feet in length, weighing 5 tons, and requiring no less than 100 men to land it.

The mineralogical and geological specimens are also good; and among the fossil remains of extinct animals—all of which are educationally arranged—are those of *bos longifrons*, the beaver, the elephant, the wild boar, &c., &c. There are also very creditable collections of natural history, entomological, botanical, ethnological and other objects, all of which are carefully arranged and rendered useful by a proper attention to labelling. I now proceed to notice the Antiquarian and Art-collections contained in this rich Museum.

Among the Egyptian antiquities is a fine assemblage of wood, porcelain, and bronze, figures and idolets of Osiris, Isis and Horus, a king as Ra, Pasht, Horus, Phtah, Thoth, Typhon, Opt, Meni, Amoun, Anubis, &c., &c.; attributes and symbols, *scarabæi*, with hieroglyphics, and other objects; mummies of the ibis, the crocodile, and the cat; an interesting carved sepulchral slab, part of a mummy-case, and the hand of a lady bearing on the middle finger a ring set with cornelian, round the wrist a bracelet of network of gold beads, studs, &c.; and also a bracelet of similar character; most of which have been presented to the Museum, with many other objects, by Mr. Alexander Peckover, whose family has been, and is, among the most energetic supporters of the institution.

Of the Celtic, or Ancient-British period, may be noticed a few flint implements, and a small but very interesting assemblage of bronze celts, palstaves, and spear-heads of various forms, from the Turves at Whittlesea, Grunty Fen, at Witchford, Peterborough, and other localities; among them are several good examples of socketed and looped celts, and of those of wedge and gouge forms. There are also some cinerary urns and other vessels; one of the urns, from Chatteris, being about 20 inches in height, and of remarkably good form.

There are a few interesting Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon antiquities, which are deserving of careful examination. Among these are some large *tesserae* from a pavement in a farm at Crew Yard, Stonea, and also fragments of other pavements; some querns or hand-mills, one of which, of large size, from Earith, near Wisbech, is formed of a conglomerate known as "plum-pudding stone," and is, therefore, of very remarkable character; and some good examples of pottery, including the ordinary forms and materials of cinerary urns, and specimens of Samian, Durobrivian, Salopian, and other wares. Among them is a fine globular urn about 20 inches in diameter, and other vessels and fragments of vessels from Casterton, South Brink, Wisbech, Earith, March, Chatteris, and other places in the Fen district. Another vessel, of simple but elegant form, 13½ inches in height, is from Waldersea Fen, and was found at a depth of 10 feet from the surface.



Others discovered in forming the Wisbech and St. Ives Railway, Doddington, are worth notice. There are also several good Roman lamps.

Some good swords and daggers are preserved, and are possessed of considerable interest. One of these is shown in one of our engravings, and is of remarkable form. It is of iron, 20 inches in length of very thick and massive character, and has never been intended for sharpening on its edges. Another (Saxon), found in the bed of the River Nene, at Raven's Willow, in the parish of Stanground, is of the usual form; as is also another, 23 inches long, from Newport Pagnell; there is also a good form of iron dagger from Earith, and an excellent bronze blade 14 inches long, from Popenhoe Manor House. Also notable are a small bronze statuette, one of the Roman *penates*, found at Lincoln, and other interesting ancient and modern bronzes from various localities.

Among the *fibulae* are two exceedingly good examples of the Anglo-Saxon period. They are of what is usually termed the cruciform shape, which appears mainly to have pertained to the Angles. To this period also is to be attributed the portion of a sword-sheath of great beauty. This elegant relic is chased with a scroll-work pattern, and has a portion of the iron sword-blade still remaining with it.

A good illustrative collection of objects from lake-dwellings in the settlement of Robenhausen, in Switzerland, is an interesting feature of the Museum. It embraces examples of celts in stag's-horn handles, bone implements also set in stag's-horn, fragments of pottery, stone, flint, and metal implements, corn from the granary, portions of woollen fabric, spindle-whorls, &c., which are valuable for purposes of comparison.

The great charm and feature of the Wisbech Museum is its splendid assemblage of ceramics, of bijouterie, and articles of *vertu*. In this it stands almost unrivalled among provincial institutions, and has, therefore, to some extent, a special interest attaching to it. The great bulk of these objects, and of the extensive and extremely valuable collection of coins, comprising about 3,000 in gold, silver, and copper, was bequeathed to the Museum, in 1869, by the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend, who by will, left his splendid collection of works of Art, and his noble collection of coins, as well as his fine library of some 6,000 volumes of books, to this institution, with the wisely stringent stipulation, that they should never be disposed of either by sale, exchange, or otherwise. At the same time the donor left by will his valuable collection of paintings to the South Kensington and Wisbech Museums jointly—that is to say, that South Kensington was to have “first pick” of the collection, and the remainder to become the property of Wisbech. Thus, naturally, the best part of the paintings went to the first, where they are made, as everything at South Kensington is, educationally available. Mr. Townshend, it may be well to add, was a native of Surrey, having been born at Busbridge, 1798, and was educated at Cambridge, where he became M.A. in 1824. He was a man of



GERMAN DRINKING CUP, CARVED CHESSMEN, &c.



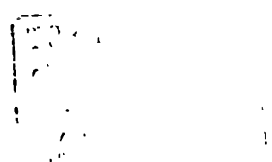
CRUCHE OF NUREMBURG WARE.



VESSELS OF ROCK CRYSTAL, GOLD CHALICE SET WITH JEWELS.

ART OBJECTS IN WISBECH MUSEUM.

*From electros supplied by J. S. Virtue & Co. "Art Journal" Office.*



high intellectual attainments, and as a poet ranked somewhat high; as a mesmerist he was also well known. He was connected with the Fen district by ties of property. In addition to the bequest of his collections, Mr. Townshend (who died without issue), left all his estate, which could be legally disposed of, upon trust for the founding of a school in London "for educational purposes of the humblest and simplest kind" for the poor.

Among the choice objects in this splendid collection, the whole of which, and indeed of every other object in this choice Museum, will well repay the most careful attention are the following:—

A marvellously fine vessel of rock-crystal, in form of a fish, beautifully mounted in silver-gilt, and of wondrous beauty, shown in our engraving on the preceding page. It is a striking example of Italian Art of the sixteenth century, and is surmounted by a figure holding a shield, on which is an excellent cameo. A cup of rock-crystal, shown in the same engraving, is also a good specimen of Art. With these may be classed some fine polished agate cups and bowls, figures, tortoise, &c., carved in precious stones, and a scent bottle of *lapis-lazuli*, covered with a reticulated net-work of gold wire, and other articles of the same precious material; a pair of white marble and *ormolu* candelabra, with flowers of exquisite workmanship; a vase of pink spar mounted in *ormolu*, and of elegant form; numerous elegant jade, ivory, inlaid mosaic, pearl, and japan. The Battersea enamel, and other snuff-boxes, are also very interesting.

In silver filigree are two delicately beautiful specimens—a pomander box of elaborate design, and a small scent vase, which is, perhaps, the most chaste and beautiful in any collection; and among the goldsmith's work is an exquisite and exceedingly rare gold purse of open filigree work, which opens and expands with a gold tasselled chain. There are also some good examples of *étui* in silver, &c., and a beautiful *chatelaine* and *étui* in agate and *ormolu*.

A grand old chalice, set with jewels of the most costly character, and of the finest possible workmanship, and a beautiful tazza of filigree work, silver gilt, are also extremely choice, as is likewise the cup supported by a knight in armour (engraved above), which is a perfect gem of Art.

A box of counters, with the head of Queen Anne and the initials Q. A.; a reliquary of brass, gilt, with figures in relief, and containing a small carving in wood; some mosaics; a delicate miniature painting of Pisa, on alabaster, by H. Van Luit; a seal, in form of a knight in armour, helmeted, and with shield in front; a toilet glass of tortoise shell and silver; a fine old silver repeater-watch with alarum, by "Claude Viet, London;" an early oviform watch, and some bronze lamps and figures, are also curious, and will repay attentive examination.

Among the carvings in ivory may be noticed a masterly group of "The Descent from the Cross;" a delicate card-tray; a *don-dami* box containing various games; a hunting-horn; and

some pipes. But by far the most exquisite specimens of carvings in this, or almost in any other museum, is the set of chessmen in ivory and box-wood; formerly the property of Louis XIV.; these are of German workmanship of the seventeenth century. The figures in this set, of which one or two are shown in the page of engravings, are of the most masterly conception and the most delicate execution possible. There are also some very good and characteristic examples of Swiss carving.

A nautilus-cup, mounted in silver gilt, with finely modelled figures and base, is a good specimen of Art; and the same remark will apply to many other articles in this superb collection.

In glass, the series of examples which, like the pottery and other departments, has been arranged with great skill and taste, presents many marked features, and is valuable as illustrating to some extent the chronology of the manufacture. Thus there will be seen an ornamental *alabastrite*, and some beads of Egyptian manufacture; lachrymatories, *unguentaria*, and other specimens of Roman Art; some Saxon beads; and a goodly assemblage of Venetian, German, and Bohemian glass. Of Venetian Art the collection contains specimens of most of the classes. Thus there are vessels of colourless transparent glass, and others of tinted transparent glass; vases of colourless glass ornamented in gold and enamel; vessels of *latticino* glass, *i.e.*, clear glass in which is embedded lace-work, reticulated patterns, formed of opaque white threads; vessels in which the decoration consists of canes of various coloured glass intermixed with similar threads of opaque white; vases of Vitro de Trina, in which the lace-work of white threads is spread over the whole surface; frosted or crackle glass; and opalised and ruby glass. One of the finest examples of German glass is the drinking-mug and cover (shown in the accompanying engraving), with Neptune and other figures in relief, and bearing on one side two shields of arms tied together with ribbon, and the words "Dur ehr und Frend in eunchtheit, 1678." There is also another good example of a drinking-mug or glass of Vitro de Trina.

The ceramic series, as I have already hinted, is remarkably good, and contains some splendid and extremely fine and rare examples, some of which it will be necessary to specify after briefly remarking that in the series will be found Egyptian, Greek, Etruscan, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, and Mediæval vessels, as well as examples of most of the best-known makes of more recent times in earthenware and porcelain. Without regarding any order in these, I now proceed to call attention to some of the more prominent objects.

Among these are a pair of Dresden groups of figures of large size and of the most perfect beauty and delicacy, both in form modelling, and in colour; they may be ranked among the finest known examples of this famous make, of which there are also in the collection a cup and saucer with raised flowers and a fine assemblage of other examples; among these are some exquisitely beautiful cups and saucers, painted with Watteau groups of

figures. Of Sèvres were the most notable is the breakfast-service belonging to Napoleon I., which was taken from his camp-equipage at Waterloo in 1815. It is of the finest character, green



NO 1. RELIEF-BRICK: ST. MATTHEW AND THE ANGEL.

ground, deeply gilt, with medallions of groups of Cupids, trophies, musical instruments, &c., in colours, or gold, on *rose-du-barry* ground, and marked with an imperial crown over the word "Sèvres" in blue. In Sèvres, also, are a pair of fine *bleu-du-Roi* vases, mounted in *ormolu*. Two "apostle-mugs" of enamelled Creussen ware, mounted in metal, are deserving of notice. One of these is dated 1664, and has the figures of our Lord and the apostles under an encircling arcade, beautifully painted, and a name to each, as "Salvator," "S. Phillippus," "S. Thomasa," "S. Bartolomeus," &c. The other, which is of larger size, bears the paschal lamb in front, and the apostles, six on each side, with their emblems and names, as "S. Thomas," "S. Matthew," "S. Jacob Minor," "S. Simon," &c. At the bottom is the inscription "IOHANN WOLFFGANG FRISCHS DRINCK VND IS, GOTT NICHT VERGISS." Another mug of the same ware has a shield of arms in front, and at the bottom the inscription "IOHANN LEONHART ROTH: ANNA BARBARA ROTHIN, GLAMIN."

A splendid *cruche* of Nuremburg ware, enamelled in colours (engraved above), bears on its front in relief a representation of the crucifixion, and beneath it a tree, while on the



NO. 3. RELIEF-BRICK: BADGE OF CHARLES V.

Palissy ware and of majolica.

sides are half-length figures, foliage, &c. It may be classed among the finest and most interesting known examples of this ware. Another *cruche* is also highly interesting; it bears in relief the history of Susannah, to each compartment of which is an inscription; it is dated 1585; another vessel dated 1577 has the shield of arms, in front, of "Hertog von Gvlich" and others on its sides. There are also some remarkably good *gres-de-Fiamand* jugs, and one or two *bellarmine*s of fine character; with a fine example or two of

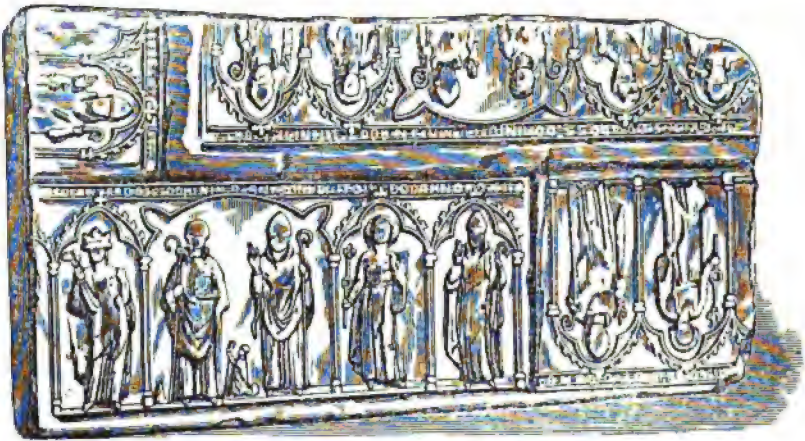


NO 2. RELIEF-BRICK: LION PASSANT-GUARDANT.



Some crackle jars, both crimson and sage, are very fine, and the Böttchers alt Haldensteben, Hochst, Berlin (of which there are some scarce figures in bisque), Delft, Frankenthal, and Oriental examples, are very noticeable.

Of English pottery and porcelain, too, are several highly interesting specimens of early mediæval—probably Norman—pitchers and other vessels; several other interesting pieces of a later date, as well as drinking bottles, puzzle jugs, tygs, &c., and a variety of examples of Chelsea, Worcester, Derby, Rockingham, Leeds, Swansea, Lowestoft, Wedgwood, Liverpool, Coalport, Davenport, and other makes. One of the most remarkable of these is a fine Liverpool bowl, the largest known, being larger than the famous Pennington bowl. This noble example is 21½ inches in diameter. At the bottom, inside, is painted a ship in full sail, union-jack flying, and cannon being fired; other ships in

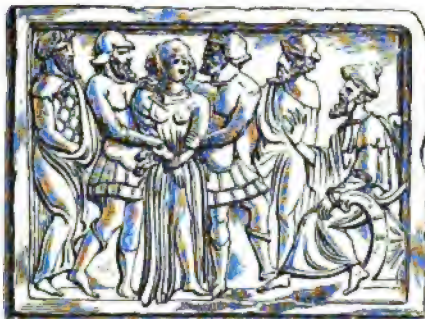


NO. 4. RELIEF-BRICK FROM RAMSEY ABBEY.

the distance; trophies below, and the words "Success to the British Fleet." A border of trophies all round. On the outside is a large temple and a panoramic sea-view, running round more than half its circumference; on the other part is a group of a man on horseback with panniers, and another man standing by, pointing, as if directing him on his way across a marshy country. The whole of the figures, &c., are painted in blue. Another interesting ceramic relic is a small cream-coloured teapot, having on one side, in relief, a representation of Portobello and the fleet lying off it, with the words in three lines PORTO BELLO TAKEN; and on the other side, the full-length figure of an admiral, with trees on one side and houses on the other, and the words, BY AD. VERNON and PORT CHACRE.

And now a few words become essential upon the miscellaneous articles in this admirable Museum, some of which I now proceed very briefly to enumerate. Among these are the following:

A large pewter dish with royal arms, motto, supporters, &c., full size in the centre and foliated border, with the date 1662 and the inscriptions "Viva Carolvs Secvndvs" and "Beati Pacifici;" and some other examples of pewter platters, &c.



NO. 5. RELIEF-BRICK: HISTORY OF SUSANNA.

another found in 1840 at Crowland Abbey, and a leather "pilgrim's bottle," are especially interesting.

There are also some beautiful and very valuable rings, buckles, snuff boxes, fans, and other personal matters, as well as a good assemblage of antique keys, ball-padlocks, iron shears, pruning-hook, spoons, candle-sticks, pocket-dial, girdle key-holder, tinder-boxes, &c.

Some encaustic paving-tiles from Wisbech Church are preserved, and bear among other devices the three lions *passant* for England, the arms of Beauchamp, Clare, and others; other tiles, evidently of local make (the searching out of this kiln I earnestly commend to the attention of local antiquaries), with green glaze and yellow glaze, and the outline simply impressed, will also repay examination.

A cavalier's boot, *temp.* Charles I.; and boot and spur, *temp.* the Commonwealth, from Hagbech Hall; some war-relics, French, Indian, Russian, &c.; a pouch with the name "Henry Colerane" "Constantinople 1722;" the "shirt-front worn by Kaspar Hauser at the time of his attempted assassination at Anspach, October 17th, 1827," beautifully plaited and with the studs attached, and other relics possess a kind of historical interest. A collection of casts of ancient seals and original *matrices*, as also the assemblages of precious stones and medals are extremely curious.

The collection of paintings comprises several interesting pic-



NO. 6. RELIEF-BRICK: HISTORY OF SUSANNA.



tures, among which, as the most striking to visitors, I may name a portrait of the Rev. Chauncey Hare Townshend, the donor of so many valuable articles, as a young man; a full-length life-size picture of Napoleon I. in his coronation robes, by Baron Gerard; a portrait of Secretary Thurlow, *the* member of parliament for Wisbech—and the only member ever sent from that town; and paintings by Townshend, Schleick, Princess Caw-lath, Benthén, Montague, Zick, &c. In the centre of the entrance hall, too, stands an exquisite piece of sculpture in marble—'Boy and Dog'—by Franck, a Belgian artist, from the Exhibition of 1851. There are also several framed engravings.



NO. 7. RELIEF-BRICK: HISTORY OF SUSANNA.

In local matters, as I have before said, the Museum is especially rich, and this feature is again brought prominently forward by the collections of local traders' tokens; the fine collection of ancient deeds (among the rest one of John of Gaunt), with the seals attached, from the Dering collection; a curious and unique map of the hundred of Wisbech copied, in 1697, from one of the year 1567; a number of local books, both relating to the place and by local authors; some original wood-blocks for printing at the heads of patters, and an original old copper-plate engraving of Wisbech.

A curious MS. on vellum of the time of Edward IV., of the swan-marks of the Fen-district, is especially valuable and interesting; as is also a *fac-simile* of another MS. of the swan-marks of the Isle of Ely, by Colville.

Another interesting feature is a collection of early newspapers, including the *Nottingham Mercury*, 1723; Howgrave's *Stamford Mercury*, 1736, and many others.

A "scriptural series," *i.e.*, a collection of objects illustrating scripture-history, carefully arranged and descriptively labelled, exists in this Museum, and is found most attractive, as well as educationally useful.

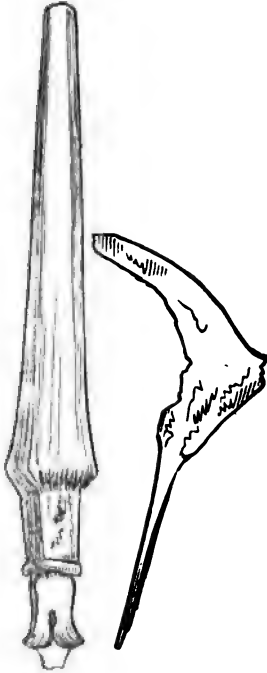


NO. 8. RELIEF-BRICK: HISTORY OF SUSANNA.

The collections of autographs is very striking, and contains many of the highest value and importance. Among them are original letters of Queen Elizabeth, Mary Queen of Scots, dated "Scheffeld xii d'octobre" (1570 or 1584), and others; the original MSS. of Byron's "Hours of Idleness," Dickens's "Great Expec-

tations," Monk Lewis's "Monk," several pages of Las Cases' "Life of Napoleon," corrected in the handwriting of Napoleon himself, and autographs of Charles II., Cardinal Richelieu, Melancthon, John Wesley, Sir Walter Scott, Haydon, Lawrence, Poussin, Carracci, Rubens, Paul Veronese, Voltaire, Burns, Swift, Lavater, Mozart, Nelson, Canning, Catherine de Medici, Beethoven, and hundreds of other celebrities in every department of life.

And now, as a *bonne bouche* for the close of this brief notice of the treasures in the Wisbech Museum, let me call special attention to a few objects of extreme interest which are there found. I allude to some bricks with figures and devices in relief.



SWORD AND PRUNING HOOK.

These I engrave, of a reduced size, from photographs taken especially for the purpose. In the series of engravings are represented eight of those curious relief-bricks. One of these (No. 1) apparently represents St. Matthew and the Angel—St. Matthew holding a pen in one hand, and in the other a scroll upon which he is writing, which rests upon his knee. Four others (Nos. 5–8) undoubtedly illustrate four main passages in the "History of Susanna." In the first Susanna is seen brought by two guards before her husband, Joacim, who is seated, and an elder is on either side. In the second she is taken out to execution, as described in verses 45 and 46—"When she was led out to death, the Lord raised up the holy spirit of a young youth whose name was Daniel, who cried with a loud voice, 'I am clear from the blood of this woman.'" In the third of these interesting bas-reliefs, Daniel is at the "place of judgment," examining and evidently just in the act of condemning an elder in the remarkable words of the 55th verse, "'Thou has lied against thine own head, for even now the Angel of God hath received the sentence of God to cut thee

in two.' So he put him aside." In the fourth the two elders are being put to death by stoning, and a basket of stones, arranged for the purpose, stands beneath a tree behind the executioners.

Another remarkable brick (No. 4) in this Museum, but one of totally different character, is also shown in my series of engravings. It is from Ramsey Abbey, about 20 miles from Wisbech, and is 10 inches long by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches in width. The soft clay, it will be seen, has been impressed in a variety of ways, with a mould of extreme beauty, bearing a series of six figures beneath an arcade of one wide octfoil arch in the centre, and two

narrower trefoiled arches with crockets and finals, on either side. From the fortunate circumstance of the repetition of the impresses of this mould upon this one brick the whole design is made complete. Over each arch occurs the name of the figures represented, but the lettering is so very imperfect as to render their reading in some instances a matter of difficulty. In the first arch the head of the figure, which is all that is impressed, is mitred, and he holds a pastoral staff terminating in a cross *patée* in his left hand. Over this figure appear to be the words "S. Thome . . . ." so that it probably represents St. Thomas-a-Becket. In the second arch is the figure of a king wearing the well-known form of crown on the coins of Edward I., II. and III., and holding in his right hand a sceptre with *fleur-de-lis* termination, and his left hand raised and most probably holding a ring. Over this is "S. Edwardv. . ." and the figure is therefore, doubtless, that of S. Edward the Confessor. Under the wide central arch are two principal figures and a small one. The first of these is a priest holding a foliated crozier in his right hand, and at his feet on his left side kneels a small figure of a priest holding a crozier in front; the second is a bishop wearing a mitre and having in his left hand a crozier, while his right is held in the conventional attitude of benediction. Over the first of these the lettering seems to be "S. Doniet," but over the other it is very indistinct. In the fourth arch is apparently a female figure, probably a queen, holding in her right hand a sceptre; and in the fifth is a mitred bishop, with foliated crozier in his left hand, and his right held up in an attitude of benediction.



LEATHER "PILGRIM'S BOTTLE."

A portion of another brick shown on the engraving (No. 2) bears a part of a lion *passant guardant*, with stars.

The subject No. 3 is simply a part of one of the badges of Charles V., or Philip II., with the dragon and one of the pillars of Hercules, and the letters PLVS being part of his well-known motto, "Plus Oultre" altered into "Plus ultra" (more beyond).

It is well for a moment to allude to one or two other features of this interesting Museum. These are the South African collection, formed by the well-known Thomas Clarkson, who was a native of Wisbech; the collection of African curiosities, obtained by the late Dr. Stanger, one of the ill-fated Niger expedition; the assemblage of curious objects from the South Seas and from North-west America, collected by Admiral Swaine, who accompanied the expedition to circumnavigate the globe under Captain

Vancouver, in 1797; and the highly interesting collection of dried plants, carefully mounted and arranged, by Mr. Townshend.

And now, before closing, it is necessary to say a few words about the splendid collection of books, which, thanks to the munificence of the Rev. Chauncey Hare Townshend and others, form the valuable and extensive library attached to the Museum. Of the books bequeathed an excellent catalogue has recently been printed by the authorities of the Museum. The collection contains many very valuable works, and the greater part are bound in a costly and excellent manner. The biographical series is very extensive, as is also the historical, and in this latter division are many works of rarity and excellence. In works of fiction, and in those of poetry and the drama, the library is very rich, as it is also in books of travel, &c. There is also a fair collection of editions of the Bible, including the 1588, 1651, and 1660 editions; the Baskett's edition, 1719; the Baskerville, 1763; Bagster's, and other polyglots; Martin Luther's 1693 and other dates; and many other editions. The two divisions which appear to be least worthily represented in the library are those of archæology and local history, and of painting and the Fine Arts. To the extension of these it would be well for the authorities to direct their attention as a great means of furthering the value and the usefulness of the institution.

Enough has surely been said to prove that the Wisbech Museum is one of no ordinary kind, and that the treasures of which it is the receptacle are of the highest class of Art, and of the greatest interest and importance. Wisbech is indeed peculiarly fortunate, not only in having this splendid Museum, but in having among its inhabitants men of such refined taste, of such liberal mind, and of such zealous disposition, to support it and to extend its usefulness, as those who are now engaged in its conservation. It has among its most energetic friends, what other museums I could name lack, men of the highest attainments, some of whom have made Art their life-study, and whose homes are galleries of Art, and others whose antiquarian and ethnological knowledge is brought to bear on those departments, with others equally capable of superintending the remaining divisions. It is a Museum that is deserving of constant and undiminished support from all classes of "Fen people." I hold that, with such an institution in their midst, embracing a museum so excellent, and a library of such value and extent, it is the bounden duty, as it ought surely to be the pleasure, of the inhabitants of the district to further its interests and to extend its usefulness by every means in their power.

In addition to the objects referred to in this paper, a statuette of William Makepeace Thackeray, in plaster, from the original *chef d'œuvre* of Sir Edgar Boehm, R.A., is deserving of notice. Thackeray, when in Paris, gave two sittings to the sculptor, and the late Anthony Trollope considered it the best work of that artist, the attitude and pose of the figure being remarkably natural

and life-like. A Bidery dish for burning incense and other perfumes, models of local bridges, a man-trap (a board used to be shown near Wisbech with the warning to orchard-robbers "Man-trap set here"), birds' nests and eggs, and many other articles of interest to visitors.

With regard to the valuable collection of books added to the Library by the Rev. C. H. Townshend's bequest, the catalogue issued in 1871 describes them as follows:—

The permanent value of the collection will be found in the rich store of works in various branches of sound literature and learning—English Classical and Foreign History especially being well represented, In addition to the English historians, the reader will find well-edited reprints of Holinshed, Froissart, Hardyng, and other old chroniclers. Hardly a name of eminence will be found missing from the temple of our English Muse, while the works of Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, Goëthe, Schiller, Moliere, and Corneille, indicate the varied reading of the accomplished donor. The great number of biographical works enable the reader to trace the characters and fortunes of men and women of almost every age and country, and in nearly every walk of life. . . . There are but few works illustrating the Fine Arts, but the names of Brewster, Herschell, Newton, and Humboldt will be dear to the votaries of science, and stand in noble relief from works illustrating the superstitions of bye-gone times.

Among the more valuable works is Samuel Purchas's "Pilgrimes," 5 vols. fol. 1625; a very fine Black Letter Chaucer of 1561 (3rd edition); the second edition of Tewrdannckh, one of the most remarkable of early printed books for type and engravings, dated 1519; the 1613—1622 edition of Drayton's Polyolbion, with the curious and rare maps, in two parts; and many other scarce and beautifully illustrated works.

The archives, ancient manuscripts, and books belonging to the Corporation of Wisbech have, within the last few years, been removed from the room adjoining the Council Chamber at the Town Hall to a room arranged for their reception on the ground floor of the Museum. Originally, the books comprised in this library were placed in a chamber over the porch at the south-west entrance to the church, nearest the Vicarage, which at one time had been used to store the bows, arrows, and other warlike implements, which each parish was bound to provide for the public safety. "Created in the middle of the seventeenth century," writes Mr. John Cordy Jeaffreson, "by several of the more scholarly and studious of the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood, each of whom thought it well to put his books into a common stock so as to obtain command of a comprehensive

assemblage of works by surrendering a few volumes to the general use, the Wisbech Town Library is a favourite example of the old club-libraries that, having their origin in the sentiment and principle of social co-operation, were established in so many of our provincial towns between the Revival of Letters and those of the Stuart period. Secretary Thurlow, whose portrait, presented by Mr. Daniel Gurney, of Norwich, is placed in the Library, contributed eighty-one volumes to the book-club that came into existence while he was a resident of Wisbech, and the capital burgesses provided the shelves and other requisite furniture of the chamber from 1654 to the time of their removal, within the memory of living men, to the library of the Town Hall." A librarian, who was usually the Master of the Grammar School, was appointed by the Capital Burgesses and afterwards by the Corporation, the Rev. George Thompson being the last who filled that office. But the library and manuscripts were for many years unfortunately allowed to fall into serious decay, and when the British Archæological Society visited Wisbech in 1878, Mr. W. de Gray Birch and others of its members drew attention to the interesting character of the contents of this muniment room, and urged that the books should be rescued from the deterioration which they were suffering. As the result of this representation, the Museum directors offered to assume the guardianship of these interesting works, which offer the Corporation accepted, and they were removed at the expense of the Corporation to a room which has been fitted with cases for their reception, and heated to prevent dampness further injuring them. The original catalogue of this collection, made in the eighteenth century, contains the names of its benefactors, including the Right Hon. John Thurlow, Principal Secretary of State to Cromwell; Algernon Peyton, D.D., Rector of Doddington; John Machin, Vicar of Elm; William Coldwell, Vicar of Wisbech; Edward Brooke, Rector of Walsoken; Henry Pierson, Wisbech and Downham Market, one of the founders of the library, and many others, whilst another book which recorded the borrowed volumes, contains autographs of Anthony Lumpkin, supposed to be "Tony Lumpkin" of Oliver Goldsmith, in his play "She Stoops to Conquer"; Beauprè Bell, Henry Pierson, and many others.

The sacred, theological, devotional and philosophical MSS. of the thirteenth and four following centuries, as well as the Municipal archives of this country, have been the subject of a special report to Parliament by the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, which was made in 1883, the members of that Commission com-

prising the Marquis of Salisbury, the Earl of Rosebery, Earl Carnarvon, Earl Houghton, and Lord Acton. Mr. John Cordy Jeaffreson, the author of this report, describes the contents of this library in detail, and a few extracts from his elaborate review may be given, indicating some of the more interesting features of the Corporation records, now deposited in the Wisbech Museum. He writes :—

In the ten volumes of "Wisbech Records" consisting of the Holy Trinity Guild Book (1379—1566), and nine "Assembly and Orders' Books" (1566—1823, A.D.), the people of Wisbech possess a body of municipal evidence that afford a variety of materials for the history of the borough for a period of 444 years, with the exception of certain years between 1379 and 1566, of which no mention is made in the first of the ten volumes. A singularly interesting register of the yearly accounts and ordinances of the Guild of the Holy Trinity of Wisbech, this oldest book of records gives a noteworthy view of the usages and economy of the fraternity, whose possessions and local authority passed to the townspeople by the letters patent, that in the year of Edward the Sixth created them a body corporate. On the book's latest leaves appear some curious entries, touching controversies about rights of common, that agitated the people of certain of the Ely fens, in the earlier years of Elizabeth, and in 1562 gave the Bishop of Ely occasion to write to his tenants of Dodyngton and Marche,—'I am sorye to hear that ye are so stowte, so disordered, and so lawlesse people that neyther the order of me and my counsell can stay you. I understand ye fall to your olde practise. Please your selves in your deuises; go contrarye to your own agrementes, and pynne your neighbours cattell. Sithe ye be at that poynte I ensure you what the lawe will gyve me that I intende to use roundeleye agaynste you. Say not but that ye haue hadd warnyng. So fare ye well from Downham, the viiith of April, 1562. Reference is made to the following works among others:—*Liber Prosperi de Vita Contemplatina and Actina*, a beautiful specimen of thirteenth century penmanship on vellum. *Book of Records of Courts Halimote*, held at Wisbech—an almost perfect volume, though injured by mould, to be studied by historians of the obsolete law and usages of the fen country. *Charter of Charles II.*, wills and benefactions, 1739, A.D., folio, bound in leather, containing extracts from the wills of John Crane, who left many charitable legacies; Richard Loake, whose cup is used on Mayor's day by the Wisbech Corporation; Anthony Lumpkin, Thomas Parke, &c., of John Crane, the famous Cambridge apothecary, whose benevolence is fitly commemorated in Lyson's *History of Cambridgeshire*. It is recorded that he left £60 every fifth year, for ever, to the University of Cambridge to be given to "poor scholars for their relief that are sick, for paying for their physic, diet or other things, necessary for them in their sickness."

The Charters of the Wisbech Corporation are preserved in a glass case which enables them to be seen without being handled,

as they are becoming somewhat broken and dilapidated. The earliest of these is dated 1st of June, in the third year of Edward VI., 1549, and shows that in consideration of a payment of £260 10s. 10d. by certain inhabitants of Wysbyche, Edward the Sixth constituted and created the inhabitants of the town a body Corporate by the name of the Inhabitants of the Town of Wysbyche in the Isle of Ely, co. Cambridge, and granted to the same inhabitants divers messuages, lands, &c., in the parishes of Wysbyche, Leverington, Newton, Elm, Tydd St. Mary, Emneth, West Walton, and Walpole, formerly pertaining to the fraternity or guild of the Holy Trinity of Wysbyche. Provision is also made for the appointment of a schoolmaster with a salary of £12 per annum. The second charter is dated from Westminster, 28th January, 1611, in the 8th year of the reign of James I., reincorporating the town of Wisbech with extension of the powers and privileges accorded by the previous charter of Edward VI., the ten burgesses being by the provisions of this document designated "Capital Burgesses." Accompanying this is a translation into English, on vellum, but much worn and defaced. The third charter, dated 27th February, 1681, 21st year of Charles II., confirms, and more precisely defines, the privileges of the inhabitants accorded by the two previous documents. This is also dated from Westminster, and there is a translation of it into English, on vellum. This charter, with an introduction by Mann Hutcheson, F.S.A., Town Bailiff in 1788, was printed at Wisbech in 1791.

The miscellaneous unbound writings comprise some curious documents of some interest to the local antiquarian. The earliest is in the first year of Edward VI., and is a survey and terrier on three skins of vellum of lands formerly belonging to the Guild of the Holy Trinity of Wisbech and granted to the burgesses. In a deed, dated 1562, there is some curious spelling. It is an agreement between Queen Elizabeth and the Bishop of Ely, "for and concernynge the devisioun separacion order vse and boundes of a certen fenne or marisshe grounde commonly called Wysbyche Fenne and Sutton Fenne nowe in variaunce by the advise and mediacion of William Humberston, Adlerde Welbye, Leonarde Irbye, &c." Of the year 1581, there are particulars of a Star Chamber petition against the clerk and gauger of the Market of Wysbyche and his deputy, who were charged with extortion, and fined £100 and £50 each, with imprisonment in Fleet prison, to make full restitution to the parties injured; further to be pilloried, first at Westminster and then at Wys-



bech, and evermore disqualified for holding office or giving evidence in any court of justice. But this Wisbech extortioner—George Haysyll by name—set the High Court of the Star Chamber at defiance, and a subsequent letter records that he made no restitution of the £133 due to his victims, but “hath lyved as lasciviously this somer as ever he did at any time before, practysinge vnlawfull games as bowlinge, ryfflinge, and such like of his owne authority, without lycence of any of the Justices of Peace next adjoininge.” What was done with this defiant offender of three hundred years ago history does not tell. A packet of documents relating to the repair of Walsoken *alias* Wisbech Bridge dates from a period between 27th Elizabeth to 14th Charles I. Some papers relating to Dr. Hawkins’ almshouses in Wisbech are dated in 1633, and show that Henry Hawkins, D.C.L., left a legacy of £300 to Wisbech, and that the almshouses were built at a cost of £192. Another document, dated 1656, shows that James Whinnell, of Wisbech, gentleinan, having used “scandalous words” to the Right Hon. William Lord Viscount Say and Seale, and having recovered £500 damages and agreed to receive £100 instead of that sum, his son, the Hon. Richard Fiennes, and thirteen other persons, are constituted trustees to hold and apply the said money for the use of the Poor of Wisbech. Another deed provides that the bond shall be void on payment of certain sums at certain dates “at the North Porch of the Parish Church of Wisbech.” A conveyance, dated June 22nd, 1692, by Edward Medworth, tinker, of Giftsmear, Nottingham, of a cottage and acre of land on Wisbech Brink to Thomas Reynolds, of Wisbech, shows that it was to be held in trust “to and for the only proper use and benefit of the Tenn Capitall Burgesses of the town of Wisbech and their successors for ever, to be disposed of by the said Capitall Burgesses for the benefit and advantage of the poore of the said Town of Wisbech for ever.” A deed of conveyance, dated 1702, is of 240 acres of land by Edward Tregenna, Middle Temple, gentleman, to the Burgesses of Wisbech to indemnify any persons that may sustain damage from the cutting of Guyhirn Bank. A copy of a will of Robert Smythe, of Wysebech (1520), directs his body to be interred in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the church of St. Peter, Wysebyche, and he bequeathes “his best beast for his mortuary,” and 20s. to High Altar of the said church for my tythes and offerynges neccllygently forgotten,” and the sum of £20 to ye buyldynge of ye stepull (steeple) of ye said chirche of Wysebeche.” There are other curious writings

but space does not admit of further quotation from this valuable report to Parliament.

Many of the books are valuable, particularly Montfaucon's *Antiquities* which is somewhat mutilated, and the *Polyglott Bible*. The works are principally Treatises on Divinity and Ecclesiastical History, and amongst them Melancthon, Augustine, Calvin, Tertullian, &c., as well as a number of classical works are to be found. The Museum Library now contains about 12,000 volumes, some 6,000 of which, as before noted, were received as part of the Townshend bequest, and these latter comprise first and early editions of considerable value, some of Dickens' works with the autograph of the authors, and other books of unique value. In addition to the circulation of standard and reference works, the demand for modern books has been met by obtaining a selection from Mudie's of the latest works issued, and this has led to an increase of subscribers. The reading room, which is furnished with illustrated papers, reviews, &c., has been lately comfortably heated on Perkins' high pressure system, which has also been extended to the Townshend room. It is managed by a Board of Directors, the Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire being President, Mr. A. E. Clarke, Treasurer; Mr. J. Leach and Mr. F. J. Gardiner, Secretaries; and Mr. G. Oliver, who is most courteous in giving information, the Curator.

The Endowment Fund of the Museum has been during recent years increased by bequests and gifts from the President and his family. There are about 126 members associated with this institution. The Museum and Library are open every week day except on Bank Holidays, and in order that all inhabitants who desire, may have the opportunity of visiting it, the Museum is also open at the nominal charge of a penny on Thursday evenings. Probably few are aware how well worthy of a visit this admirable collection of objects is, and the description of some of its interesting features that is given here, may possibly stimulate many young, as well as older people, to make themselves better acquainted with its contents, and to store the mind with the treasures of knowledge which the library contains.

The Working Men's Club and Institute is one of the most successful and well administered organizations of its kind in the kingdom, and the fact that in a town of the size of Wisbech, it should be able to register some 1,200 members on its books, and that it should have accumulated an endowment fund of £7,200, indicates that the system of management adopted by its trustees and officers has met with public approval. Its beginning was

insignificant, but in 30 years, it has so developed that it deserves a prominent place among the distinctive features of the town. The most crowded meeting of the year is that which is annually held in the Public Hall, under its auspices. Amongst the chief speakers at these meetings have been men of widely differing views, who have responded to the invitation of the Committee to lend their aid, including among others the Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, the late Viscount Hampden, Lord Battersea, two Bishops of Ely (the late Dr. Harold Browne and Lord Alwyne Compton), two Deans of Ely (the late Dr. Goodwin and Dr. Stubbs), the late Dean of Chester (Dr. Howson), the Dean of Rochester (Dr. Reynolds Hole), the late Canon Hopkins, Canon Bulstrode, Sir Joseph Pease, M.P., Sir Theodore Fry, M.P., Mr. H. Fell Pease, M.P., Mr. A. Pease, M.P., Hon. A. Brand, the Rev. Fleming Williams, L.C.C., the Rev. W. E. Winks, and Mr. A. E. Fletcher, recently Editor of the *Daily Chronicle* but now of the *New Age*, &c. The Presidents of this Institution have been the Rev. W. Foster, Mr. Jonathan Peckover, Mr. S. J. Pocock, and Mr. Ward Layle, the Vice-Presidents during that period including Mr. J. Dann, Mr. W. M. Boulton, Mr. Jas. Long, and Mr. Wilmot. The Trustees are Mr. Alexander Peckover, the Lord Lieutenant of Cambs., Mr. Henry Sharpe, J.P., and Mr. W. M. Boulton, J.P.

The originator of the Working Men's Club and Institute was the late Mr. Jonathan Peckover, whose interest in the working classes suggested that a "home" should be provided for the adherents of the local Temperance Society, where they could meet without being exposed to the temptations of a public house. Through Miss Priscilla H. Peckover (whose interest in temperance work has extended over a long period) a meeting of the committee of the Temperance Society was convened, and Mr. Peckover suggested the temporary hiring of a room or cottage. A suitable place was ultimately found at the back of the late Ald. Bays' residence in Upper Hill Street. With a capital of £44, which was collected in the town, the Working Men's Club and Institute commenced its career on the 5th January, 1864. The President of the Temperance Society, the Rev. W. Foster (a Wesleyan Minister), and the officers of that Society, at first, managed its affairs. Three months afterwards, a separate committee was formed for the Institute, and Mr. Jonathan Peckover became its first President, retaining that position until his lamented death in February, 1882. In 1867, when the membership had increased to 267, the Alfred House property, formerly the residence of Mr.

Thomas Dawbarn, was purchased for £800, and the proceeds of a grand bazaar which raised over £300, together with a sum in hand, discharged half the liability thus incurred. Educational classes were formed, the Alfred House Lodge of Oddfellows was opened, the library was developed and in 1871, Mr. Algernon Peckover laid the foundation stone of a new Lecture Hall and additional premises. These were opened in May, 1872, by Dr. Harold Browne, then Bishop of Ely, and afterwards Bishop of Winchester. Miss Susanna Peckover laid the foundation stone of the Gymnasium in 1873, four years later the President provided at his own cost a turret and set of carillons, which chime the quarters and play a tune every two hours. These are now placed in a new clock tower 96 feet high, which has since been erected. An additional story was added to the original Alfred House premises, and to meet the financial needs of these improvements a Fine Art Exhibition was held in 1881, which was remarkably successful. The institution at this time had obtained an excellent start and seemed to increase rapidly, until it reached a membership of 1,000. The Mechanics' Institute having ceased to exist, its library was added to the 4,000 volumes already acquired by the Working Men's Institute. But the unexpected death of the President in February, 1882, was a terrible blow, and deprived the Institute of a true friend and a most generous supporter, whose leadership was fully trusted and valued by every member. Mr. Jonathan Peckover had occupied the President's chair from 1864 to 1882, and during that period many new developments were originated and received substantial help from his purse. The marks of esteem and regard shown at the funeral for their benefactor, and also at the memorial meeting held in the Institute Hall, will not be easily effaced from the memory of those who attended those sorrowful gatherings. Subsequently a full-length portrait of their esteemed President, painted by Mr. Forbes-Robertson, was placed in the Hall, provided by subscriptions from members and friends of the Institute. Mr. S. J. Pocock undertook to fill the important position, and ably discharged the duties from 1882 to 1887, until he surrendered the office to Mr. Ward Layle, whose presidency has extended over ten years, and has been equally as successful as those of his predecessors. The vice-presidents, Mr. James Long (who has been elected vice-president for life, in recognition of his able services), and Mr. F. H. Wilmot have been among the oldest and most energetic supporters of this Institution. The treasurer, Mr. William Brooks, has also given long and faithful service, and the present secretaries,

Messrs. George Oldham and George Stevens, efficiently fulfil their duties, with the aid of the Committee of Management, and quite an array of officers and sub-committee-men, many of whose names are to be found emblazoned on the Institute Merit Boards, as a recognition of their devotion of much time and thought to the advancement of its interests. Mr. John Whitethread, the oldest member of the Committee, was present at the meeting called to form the Institute 33 years since, and has consequently been associated with its management during the whole of its career. He has been awarded, with some others, the silver medal of the Institute, as a recognition of long and valued services. The Merit Board, framed in carved oak, with the motto "Honour to whom honour is due," and placed in the Institute Hall, bears the names of past committee men who have rendered special service to this institution. This distinction was originated in April, 1868, about four years after the establishment of the Institute, and now has upon it the following names of those committee men who have acted in that capacity for more than two years, and have attended half the meetings during that time, each name having to be approved at two consecutive general meetings:—

Jonathan Peckover, Esq., President, 1864 to 1882; John Whitethread, Thos. H. Williams, Clarke Hazel, Marshall G. Strapps, James Watson, Joseph Ratcliff, Thomas Tims, Frederic Cox, Robert Pope, John Oldham Alfred Balding, Thomas Blake, William Mattin Boulton, Wm. Henry Coulam, James Dann, John W. Brightman, Dennis Rowe, Archelaus Tennant, John Thomas Howard, James Long, Thomas Forscutt, Robert Allen, Levi Oakley, Joseph Wright Alcock, F. H. Wilmot, James Whitehead, Charles Hopkin, Thomas Ling, Richard Cooper, John G. Fountain, Wm. Brooks, Wm. A. Dawson, Philip Williamson, Wm. B. Dunn. Wm. Oakes, Arthur Long, George Virgo, S. J. Pocock, Esq., President, 1882 to 1887; John H. Hall, George Oldham, C. W. Cooper, James Bushell, Edward Shred, Ward Layle, Esq., President, 1887 to; Richard W. Green, Arthur James Peggs, Harry R. Bostock, Harry E. Beale, Matthew W. Cole, J. T. Clarke, W. Hercock, Thomas Powley, John Sutherell.

The perusal of the annual report (1895-6) of this Institute points to its many ramifications in the shape of clubs and societies sheltered under its fostering wing. The following are some of the Clubs which have their own officers and committees:—Savings' Bank, Coal, Christmas, Gymnastic, Excursion, Skating, Chess, Draughts, and Domino. There are Reading and Discussion and Shorthand Classes, and the Natural History Society, which holds periodical exhibitions or meetings. Then there is the Annual

Show Committee, the Library Committee, as well as several sub-committees, which share with the Committee of Management the work of directing these organizations. The Savings' Bank Club accounts for 1896 show that £1,000 had been paid in during the year, and that the total amount to its credit had been £1,939. The Coal Club had delivered 1,308 tons of coal to its members, and the Christmas Club 65 sacks of flour, besides groceries, beef, poultry, &c., the amount deposited being £80. From the excellent library 16,000 volumes were circulated during the same year, and about 180 new books added. The Educational Classes have not been as well supported as could have been wished, though the Reading and Discussion and Shorthand Classes have proved very useful to many of its members, the former taking for study the Industrial History of England and *Macaulay's History*, under the guidance of its chairman, Mr. Robert Dawbarn. One important element in the success of the Institute has been the Spring and Autumn conferences of the officers of the various classes and sub-clubs, at which matters affecting its welfare are discussed. It has endowments amounting to £7,200, viz., Maintenance Income Fund, £4,600; Library Fund, £2,100; Chimes Fund, £500; and its latest development is the opening of a Ladies' Room for the lady members, who number over 300. The commodious and convenient reading, smoking, and club rooms of the Working Men's Institute are worth visiting, and among other objects of interest will be found the portrait of the President, Mr. Jonathan Peckover, before referred to; portrait of the Rev. Wm. Ellis, Missionary to Madagascar; portrait of the Queen, with her own autograph; and several fine artist's proof engravings from Gustave Doré's paintings.

One interesting feature of the Institute is the opportunity it gives for the meeting of Friendly Societies under its roof. When preaching in the Parish Church, to an assembly of Friendly Societies, on Hospital Sunday, September 20th, 1896, the Dean of Peterborough (Dr. Ingram), suggested the desirability of at least one lodge in each town holding its meetings elsewhere than at a licensed house. There are actually twelve of these benefit societies now meeting there, viz.:—

ODDFELLOWS (Four Lodges). Alfred House Lodge, Past Grands' Lodge, Juvenile Lodge, Imperial Female Lodge.

SHEPHERDS (Six Lodges). Friendly Fountair Lodge, Strict Benevolence Lodge, Shepherds' Increase Lodge, Juvenile Lodge, Friendly Refuge Shepherdesses Court, Friendly Union Court.

OTHER SOCIETIES. Bricklayers' Society, Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners.

In concluding this necessarily condensed summary, it may be added that, among the causes of the conspicuous and enduring success of the Institute, should be mentioned the interest and liberality shown by many of its supporters, the energy of its officers, the loyalty of its members, the adoption of a non-political and non-sectarian platform in the administration of its affairs, and the avoidance of amusements of a questionable nature, or of refreshment bars such as are often found at these clubs. One of the rules provides that no religious, party, or political discussion shall be permitted, nor shall intoxicating drinks, gambling, betting, dancing, or theatrical entertainments be allowed in the building, and every society allowed to hold meetings in the building are expected to observe this regulation. The effect of this provision is to check the controversial elements which often disturb the equanimity of a society of this kind, and to maintain friendly and cordial relations between its officers and members, who are co-operating in order to afford the working classes the opportunity of social intercourse, mutual helpfulness, mental and moral improvement, and rational recreation. Entertainments and diversions of a healthful character have been supplied, and the educational features of the Institute have been encouraged and helped as much as possible, though not always as successfully as could be desired, partly because of new developments in the School of Science and Art. The Institute motto "Labour, Learning, and Love," is appropriately exemplified in its existence of 31 years, and those who have followed its progressive career during that period, will testify that its officers and members have laboured for its advancement, have upheld and encouraged its facilities for learning those duties and responsibilities which will fit men for the battle of life, and have established the fact that there is a spirit of mutual helpfulness in such institutions which is invaluable to its members. This unity and good feeling animating its members have helped to make the Institute a model organization, which other towns, to judge from the applications it has received for information as to its principles, are desirous of emulating. Long may the Institute prosper and exercise its beneficent influence upon the toilers and workers of our neighbourhood.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND ART.



IN the early part of this century, elementary education for those children who were unable to pay for private instruction was undertaken in many towns by schools established under the British and Foreign Schools Society. That Society owed its origin in 1814, to the labours of Joseph Lancaster, who belonged to the Society of Friends, and might be termed the founder of unsectarian though religious education. Lord John Russell was at a later period President of that Society and Her Majesty became a subscriber, having also given expression to her approval of the system adopted. In Wisbech, there were British schools for boys and girls, and the Peckover family were not only liberal contributors but active workers in promoting the education of the young. The rules of the Society directed, and, indeed, still direct—for the Society continues to exist—that extracts from the Bible should be read in the schools, but catechisms or creeds were prohibited. It may be added that the monitorial method of teaching was first followed by Joseph Lancaster, who adopted the plan of Dr. Bell, superintendent of the Orphan School at Madras, by which the more advanced boys were made use of to instruct the younger pupils.

This movement on the part of the British Society was met in 1817 by the establishment of the National School Society, for educating the children of the poor in the principles of the Church of England, and as its title indicates, was of a denominational character. Previous to this, Church of England or Charity



Schools, as they were originally called, had been established in Wisbech, maintained by endowments. Amongst the benefactors to these schools, Mrs. Elizabeth Wright stands pre-eminent, as having by her will in 1732 bequeathed estates in Wisbech, Leverington, Parson Drove, Tydd, and elsewhere, to be applied to the benefit of the schools. Others have followed her example, including the Trafford Southwell family, Anthony Lumpkin, several Bishops of Ely, Dr. Jobson, formerly Vicar of Wisbech, Mr. John Edes, and many others, who have assisted by benefactions and donations in the maintenance of these schools. In fact, the increase in the value of land several years since made these endowments of considerable value, and led one historian to remark:—

An enquiry is sometimes made why these schools are not liberally opened for the admission of Dissenters, and if they were supported by a grant out of the revenues of the nation, under the direction of Parliament, there might be some reason for all classes of the community partaking of the privilege, but as these schools have been indebted from their first establishment to the present to members of the Church for their support, no reasonable complaint can be made against the trustees and subscribers.

The first Charity School was in Deadman's Lane, now Great Church Street, and had previously been the first Methodist Chapel. Mr. James Smith was appointed master at a salary of 80 guineas, in July, 1803. The boys' school contained 50 boys, each of whom wore a blue cap with red top knot, an adornment which led to their being sometimes denominated as Charity "nobs." In 1811 a boys' school was built on the site of the present Voluntary School, which was erected in 1874, between the Church-yard and the Canal, and in 1814 a girls' and infants' school in Lower Hill Street. Mr. Smith gave up his appointment on the introduction of the Lancastrian system of education, one informant says, chiefly on the ground that he was required to teach writing in sand! At that time, there were about 230 boys under tuition. Mr. Smith afterwards taught a private school for many years in the building in which the Charity School had been held, and many of his scholars to this day testify to his painstaking and conscientious desire to impart a plain elementary education to his pupils. In testimony of their esteem for their master, who died on the 2nd of December, 1835, at the age of 62, his scholars, to the number of 146, as well as many of his past pupils, erected a monument to his memory in the church of Wisbech St. Peter. At the present time, there are five Church

of England Schools in Wisbech, upon which there was expended in 1893 £2,045 and subscribed £322, the average attendance being 534. The boys' school near the Canal has been rebuilt, and affords excellent accommodation, whilst the girls' school in Hill Street has undergone some improvements. Schools have also been erected in St. Augustine's parish. The following further particulars of these schools may be appended :—

The Voluntary Schools are partly supported by the interest of various sums, amounting to £674. These sums were given by benefactors, to the Burgesses of Wisbech, for the benefit of the said schools, and are derived from the rents of an estate in Leverington. Cambs., consisting of 23 acres, purchased with two sums of £500 each, given to the said Burgesses for that purpose by the Rev. Abraham Jobson, D.D., and Mr. John Edes; also by the rents of an estate given by Elizabeth Wright, by her will in 1732, and by interest on £500 left by the said Abraham Jobson, and by dividends of £108 stock. The income amounts to about £105 and is applied in support of the schools. The St. Peter's Boys' School in Church Terrace was erected in 1874, and has an endowment of £250 yearly, being supported partly by the charities previously mentioned. Number of children, 250; average attendance, 195. St. Peter's Girls' and Infants' School, Lower Hill Street, erected in 1814. Average attendance, 147 girls and 125 infants; this school also participates in the same charities. St. Augustine's Girls' School, Monica Road, erected in 1874, for 100 girls and 150 infant; average attendance, 75 girls and 132 infants.

The endowments, owing to agricultural depression, have diminished considerably in recent years, and some difficulty has been experienced by the managers in meeting the requirements of Her Majesty's Inspectors, and maintaining their position side by side with rate-supported schools. The subscription list in aid of the schools has been materially assisted recently by the holding of a bazaar at Selwyn Hall, which realized a good amount towards the exceptional liabilities incurred in fulfilling the requirements of the Education Department.

The Boys' British School and master's house was erected in 1840 by the voluntary contributions of persons of all denominations. The Society of Friends has always been foremost in assisting elementary unsectarian education, and the British Schools found in the members of that community in Wisbech not only liberal contributors to these schools but most active workers in promoting the education of the young. Notwithstanding these assiduous efforts, there was sometimes considerable difficulty in meeting the heavy demands upon the funds, and among other sources of income, a bazaar held in the Public Hall realized a

handsome amount towards the outgoings of these schools. Mr. S. H. Miller was for a number of years an efficient teacher of the Boys' British School in Victoria Road, which was erected in 1840 at a cost of £2,000, towards which the Committee of the Council of Education—as the Education Department was then called—made a grant of £160. In November, 1874, the resources of the managers having reached a low point, a meeting was called to consider the best means of continuing the schools, when it was determined to make another effort, an amendment in favour of a School Board being rejected by 70 to 40. But a month later, the National and British School managers met in conference at the Vicarage, and resolved that the schools should be carried on until the following July, and that then six months' notice should be given that a School Board would be required. This was done, but it was not until November 28th, 1876, that official notice was received from the Education Department requiring the formation of a School Board. By that time the parishes of Walsoken, Leverington, and Upwell had arrived at a similar decision, and placed their schools under the control of a Board.

The election of the Wisbech School Board took place on December 22nd, 1876, when the Rev. John Scott, Vicar of Wisbech, Messrs. G. F. Phillips, T. Pattrick, W. M. Rust, Rev. Jas. Smith, J. Gardiner, and J. Cockett were chosen as the first members, the Vicar being subsequently elected chairman. The British Schools were transferred to the School Board, and new schools for girls and infants, with a teacher's residence, were erected on the Elm Road. Since 1876 there has been no poll taken for the election of a Board, although six times the Board has been re-appointed. Of the old Board, Messrs. W. M. Rust and John Cockett alone remain, the members now being: Rev. R. E. R. Watts, chairman; Mr. W. M. Rust, vice-chairman; Messrs. J. Cockett, E. Dawbarn, W. S. Collins, J. Goward, and W. R. Girling.

The report of the Committee of Council on Education, presented to Parliament in 1895, shows that the total receipts of the Wisbech School Board were £1,730, the total expenditure being £1,721. The receipts included grants to the amount of £877 received from the Education Department, and the sum of £850 from the local rating authority, the latter amount representing a rate of 5½d. in the pound. Loans amounted to £4,558; £162 interest and £82 in repayment of principal being paid during the preceding year. The average cost per scholar in Cambridgeshire is £1 17s. 3½d., compared with £2 2s. 6¾d.,

the average cost per scholar in the whole of England and Wales.

The Wisbech School of Science, Art and Technology has become, during recent years, an important centre of educational work in the borough. The origin of this school may be traced back nearly forty years. Mr. Samuel H. Miller, F.R.M.S., Master of the Boys' British School at that time, must be regarded as one of the pioneers of this important development. At the instance of the Mechanics' Institute, Mr. Buckmaster, of South Kensington, had previously lectured at the Public Hall, urging the importance of Art education upon the rising generation, thereby awakening the attention of the inhabitants in the subject. On January 26th, 1858, Mr. Miller delivered a lecture on "Art Education," in the Public Hall, and as a result of that lecture, a class of students was organised in the Lecture Room of the Public Hall, and other classes were held in connection therewith at the British Schools, where good work was also done. Mr. Miller himself sat at the first examination held by the Science and Art Department, and gained a full certificate and first prize, his certificate being No. 7, the successful candidates being arranged in order of merit. In 1867 the Department selected Mr. Miller to go to the Paris Exhibition, and he made a report on Elementary Art exhibits to the Government, which was printed in the *Advertiser* at the time. Mr. George Dawbarn was a prime mover in forming these classes, and he not only worked energetically but spent a considerable sum of money in procuring the appliances with which to start. Mr. R. B. Dawbarn and Mr. J. Gardiner also gave valuable aid, whilst the Peckover family could always be counted upon to assist in any educational work. In January, 1867, a second lecture was given by Mr. Buckmaster, F.R.A.S., of the South Kensington Science and Art Department, on "The Importance of the Study of Art," Dr. Howson (afterwards Dean of Chester) who was Vicar of Wisbech at that time, also speaking upon similar lines. On January 31st, three days later, the Working Men's Institute Committee resolved to establish a drawing class in connection with South Kensington, and thus commenced 27 years since, under the direction of Dr. Howson and a small committee, the class which has now developed into a School of Art. For a long period it was under Mr. S. H. Miller's tuition, and after he left Wisbech, Mr. W. D. Ward, who followed him in the head-mastership of the British Boys' School (now placed under the School Board) continued the classes. Mr. E. Worthington, Head

Master of the Peterborough School of Art, subsequently undertook the management of these classes and infused new life into them, so that the number of students increased considerably under his direction. Examinations were held and grants received under the auspices of the Institute committee until 1891, when three separate committees were in existence, the Institute, the Grammar School, and the Barton School Committees. With the approval of the South Kensington Science and Art Department, it was decided to amalgamate these committees, and application was made to the Isle of Ely County Council for a portion of the grant arising from the appropriation by Parliament of certain monies from Imperial taxation (Customs and Excise Duties) for the assistance of Technical Education throughout the country. The County Technical and Manual Instruction Committee decided that, although other applications were made from Wisbech, the Wisbech School of Science and Art should receive the grant, on the understanding that it should be applied with a due regard to the claims of those who had also sought to participate in it. Unfortunately the mode of apportionment adopted by the County Council committee proved detrimental to Wisbech, the allocation to each parish of a sum equivalent to a penny in the pound on its County Rate Assessment being preferred to payment on the basis of population. The result has been that Wisbech, with a population of 9,395, receives £151; Whittlesey, with a population of only 3,556, £171; March (6,995), £192; and Ely (8,017), £182. That is to say, whilst Whittlesey is annually granted 11½d. for every resident in the parish, Upwell 8¾d., and March 6¾d., Wisbech comes in for less than 4d., and although Wisbech has a larger population to educate in technical matters, it receives a smaller amount than either March, Ely, or Whittlesey, with which to carry on its work. On the application of the Wisbech Committee an extra grant was subsequently allotted to the populous places from the surplus remaining, this time the grant being made on the right basis—that of population. The extra grant to Wisbech is £39 yearly. The Elm, Coldham, and Friday Bridge Technical Instruction Committee, receiving a grant of £77 from the Isle of Ely County Council, has amalgamated with the Wisbech Committee, and the Joint Committee conducts classes in all four parishes. The grants earned by the classes under the late Art Master, Mr. Stratton (who has since been succeeded by Mr. Guy Pearson on Mr. Stratton's retirement), Mr. Poyser, Mr. Chivers, and other teachers, averaged about £130, the Art Classes earning £80 and the Science Classes £50. The Norfolk County Council

pays a grant based upon the attendances made and examination results obtained by Norfolk students. There are nearly 200 students in the School, of whom about 50 are admitted free, because they are elementary school teachers. The results of the examinations during the past four years have been especially good in both Science and Art subjects. The agriculture class has been very successful, one of the students, Mr. Massen, having secured fourth place in the advanced stage, and been awarded one of the first Queen's Prizes in an examination open to the whole country. It should be stated that the building now used as a School of Art was originally built by the Unitarians, by whom it was used as a place of entertainment. Afterwards it was maintained by Churchmen and Dissenters under the voluntary system, as a British School for the education of infants. When a School Board was formed, the school was no longer used, the Department requiring more convenient accommodation, but the building, with the other British Schools, was placed under the supervision of the School Board. After being temporarily utilised as an orderly room by the Volunteers for some time, the Board gave permission to the School of Art committee to take possession of it, under agreed terms of tenure, which will probably be permanent. Additions and improvements have been made to the rooms from the School of Art funds in order to provide adequate accommodation for the students. Its growth promises to make a further extension necessary. The classes held at, or in connection with the School (for additional rooms have sometimes to be hired) have comprised in addition to the numerous classes devoted to the various branches of Art and Science, agriculture, cookery, dressmaking and dress cutting, fruit culture, dairying, carpentry, wood carving, Tonic Sol-fa, first aid and nursing, use of tools, mechanical drawing, &c. In 1895, an Evening Continuation School was started by the same Committee under the management of Mr. Jos. S. Smith, of Fridaybridge, and assistant teachers, and it has proved a successful undertaking, the higher grants having been earned as a result of the first session's work, in addition to a commendatory report from the Inspector who does not hold any examination, but ascertains the progress made by unexpected or "surprise" visits. Similar schools have been established by the same Committee in Elm, Fridaybridge, and Coldham. The Rev. R. E. R. Watts, M.A., Vicar, is Chairman of the Committee; Mr. F. J. Gardiner, Vice-Chairman; and Mr. J. H. Dennis, solicitor, in 1892 succeeded Mr. Alfred Balding, with whom he was in 1891 Joint Secretary,

in the duties of Secretary and Custodian of the examination papers. The annual Art and Science examinations are held in the Public Hall and School of Art during May in each year, when over 300 students are examined.

From the Corporation records now preserved in the Museum, the Wisbech Grammar School appears to date from the year 1379. Prior to the Reformation, the work of education was carried on by the clergy attached to a chantry, which in many towns belonged to the parish church. When, however, the monasteries were dissolved, other religious foundations shared their fate, and in the year 1547 "An Act for Chantries Collegiate" was passed, which dissolved the chantries and vested their possessions in the King. In the case of Wisbech, the records clearly show that King Edward VI appointed a commission to make due enquiries into the "Guild of the Holy Trinity," belonging to the town. An entry was made in 1548 showing that these Commissioners, together with the Aldermen and Churchwardens of Wisbech, "satisfactorily ascertained that a Grammar School, to educate and bring up the youths, had been maintained by the Fraternity which was founded in the second year of King Richard II within the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, and which was called 'the Trinitie Gylde.'" In consequence of the dissolution of the old Chantry Grammar Schools, it became necessary to found others, so that we find numerous charters being granted for this purpose by King Edward VI. Wisbech Grammar School Charter was granted in 1549, in the reign of Edward VI, and orders "that there shall be in the town of Wisbech a school or place of learning for the instruction of boys and young men in grammatical knowledge and polite learning." The charter of Charles II confirms that of Edward VI, and distinctly states that the schoolmaster shall be elected by the Capital Burgesses. The Bishop of Ely for the time being had the visitation, reformation and correction of both schoolmaster and school. On the quadrennial visitation of his Lordship, we are told that the senior boy was expected to deliver a Latin oration in his presence. The endowments of the school comprise the charities known as the Grammar School, Sir Miles Sandys' Charity, John Crane's Charity for the schoolmaster and William Holmes' Charity for exhibitions. The Corporation pays to the Governing Body the annual sum of £46 10s. 6d. in commutation of various payments which were formerly made. The endowments arise from the present school buildings, playground, and cottage, together with rent from  $4\frac{1}{2}$  acres of land

in Crab Marsh, Sir Miles Sandys' Charity, 1636, comprising 28a. 3r. 6p. of land at Elm, and John Crane's Charity, 1651, part of which he bequeathed to the Grammar School. William Holmes gave by will in 1656, £400 to be invested in land, which consists of 40 acres at Holbeach for the provision of two scholarships at Magdalen College, Cambridge. In 1879, the Endowed School Commission propounded a new scheme which was approved by Her Majesty in Council. It provided that the governing body should consist of nine persons, six representative and three nominated governors. Three were to be appointed by the Corporation, three by the Wisbech Charity Trustees, two by the Master and Fellows of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and one by the Bishop of Ely. The school was to continue to be managed as a day and boarding school for boys, divided into senior and junior departments under a Head Master, who must be a graduate of some University within the British Empire, but no master is to be disqualified by reason of his not being, or intending to be, in holy orders. The Head Master to receive a yearly salary with capitation grant of not less than £3 for each boy in the junior department, and £6 in the senior. Provisions were made for the granting of Foundation Scholarships in the discretion of the Governors. Four exhibitions one falling vacant yearly, of the annual value of £70 (to be increased to £75 when the income admits) were to be maintained out of the income of the endowments of William Holmes' charity to be tenable at Magdalen College, Cambridge, for four years. These exhibitions were to be awarded to boys who have been educated at the School for not less than two years, and competed for in the first instance only by boys who are natives of the parish of Wisbech St. Peter; secondly, if there be no fit candidates of the first class, by boys who are resident with their parents, guardians, or near relatives in the parish of Wisbech St. Peter; and in default of fit candidates thus qualified, the said exhibitions were to be thrown open to be competed for by boys whose parents or guardians are resident elsewhere. The rights and powers hitherto exercised by the Bishop of Ely as visitor were transferred by the scheme to Her Majesty, and to be exercised only by the Charity Commissioners, who can alter any portion of the scheme from time to time, provided such schemes be not inconsistent with the Endowed School Acts, 1869, 1873, and 1874. The first meeting of the newly appointed Governors of the Grammar School was held on January 31st, 1879, the Mayor, Mr. J. W. Stanley, who was officially appointed under the scheme to summon the first meeting, presiding at the opening of the proceedings. All the Governors



were present, as follow :—Rev. Canon Scott, Mr. F. M. Metcalfe, and Mr. John Gardiner, representatives of the Charity Trustees; Mr. J. W. Stanley, Mr. Chas. Gane, and Mr. J. Leach, representatives of the Town Council; Mr. Francis Pattrick, and Rev. Frederick Gunton, nominated by Magdalen College, Cambridge; and the Rev. V. H. Stanton nominated by the Bishop of Ely. Canon Scott was appointed Chairman, Mr. F. M. Metcalfe, Vice-Chairman; and Mr. E. H. Jackson, who had been for some years Clerk to the Charity Trustees, was appointed Clerk to the Governors. The School was re-opened under the temporary charge of Mr. Harold B. Carlyon, of Wisbech St. Mary, and subsequently of Mr. Paterson. The Rev. A. Holditch, Rev. W. R. Stanton, and Mr. A. W. Poyser have been in succession appointed Head Masters of the School. The premises were not adequate or in sufficiently good condition for the school to be successfully managed, but it was resolved to temporarily repair and adapt the existing buildings. It may be mentioned that the present school room is the ancient Town Hall, and in a panelled room behind it, until the Municipal Act of 1835 was passed, the nominations and elections of the Capital Burgesses took place, uproarious scenes being enacted there, including the bantering at noon and chairing at midnight of the successful candidates. Elections were usually held on Sunday nights. Even in more recent years some lively scenes have taken place in the school itself after the declaration of the Municipal poll at four o'clock, when the candidates, who had been returned, were expected to appear and express their acknowledgments. Seventy years ago the dilapidated condition of the school house and the cost of putting it into repair were mentioned, and the removal of the building was suggested, in order to carry a public road from Union Street through the Horsefair and across the Canal to Lynn Road. To effect this £4,000 would have been required, and it was proposed to lend money to the Corporation in sums of £50, which amount was soon promised, but the scheme for some reason fell through. Since the formation of the new body of Governors this question of the necessity for a new school has been continually forced upon their attention by the expense of repairing the old buildings, and the absolute necessity for providing better accommodation. A proposal has been made and submitted to the town by which this can be carried through. At first it was intended to accept the handsome offer of Dr. Bellamy, President of St. John's College, Oxford, to present a site on the Lynn Road opposite to the Park, and, in view of the erection of a new school, a large



**GRAMMAR SCHOOL (ANCIENT TOWN HALL) AND THE PUBLIC HALL.**  
*From Photo by Poulton & Son.*



**BARTON SCHOOL, WISBECH.**  
*From Photo by J. Kennerell.*  
**WISBECH SCHOOLS.**



amount had been promised in subscriptions. But when arrangements were nearly completed and plans had been submitted, the residence and grounds of the late Mr. George Duppa Collins, with the granaries adjoining, on the South Brink, were available, and a special meeting of the Governors was called to approve the purchase of this property for £2,500, subject to the approval of the Charity Commissioners. Dr. Bellamy, in lieu of the site on the Lynn Road, offered to contribute a sum of £500 to further the new proposal. The funds at the disposal of the Governors were expected to realise about £3,000, that amount being made up of donations promised towards the erection of a new school, accumulated exhibition funds, and the sum likely to be obtained from the sale of the site. The purchase having been simultaneously authorised at the meeting of the governors and of the Town Committee, the consent of the Charity Commissioners was applied for, and Mr. W. M. Fawcett, M.A., architect, of Cambridge, was instructed to view and report upon the property. The Commissioners after receiving that report, appeared to doubt whether the amount of funds available would be sufficient to carry out the plan satisfactorily, whereupon Mr. Peckover, the Lord Lieutenant, who presided at the meeting at which the letter from the Commissioners was read (having been previously appointed a Governor and Vice-Chairman in the place of the late Mr. F. M. Metcalfe), generously came to the rescue, and undertook to purchase and convey at a cost of £2,500 the residence and grounds of the late Mr. G. D. Collins, and to hand the property over to the Governors. Mr. Peckover had previously promised £1,000 in aid of the project, and this gift added £1,500 or more to the amount promised. A day or two later Miss Jane Peckover intimated her wish to contribute a further sum of £500 to the Grammar School Fund, and these munificent offers have enabled the Governors to undertake a portion of the original scheme. Many long and unavoidable delays had arisen in the negotiations and in obtaining the approval of the Charity Commissioners, but in the autumn of 1896 tenders were invited for the carrying out of the full scheme, comprising the adaptation of the existing residence to the purposes of the master's house, the erection of a schoolroom, class rooms, chemical laboratory, dining-hall, dormitories, and other requirements for the equipment of a modern scholastic establishment. When the tenders were received, the funds were found to be inadequate for carrying out the full scheme, five years having elapsed since the promises were given, and many by death or removals having been unable to fulfil

their undertaking. It was consequently arranged, with the approval of the Commissioners, to accept the tender of Messrs. Rands and Son, of Wisbech, at £2,602 8s. 3d. for the alteration of the residence and the erection of the schoolroom, &c., without the dormitories. The work is in progress, and it is anticipated that the end of 1897 will see its completion, and the school removed to its new quarters. The present Governors of the School are: Rev. R. E. R. Watts, M.A., Chairman; Mr. Alex. Peckover, LL.D., Lord Lieutenant of Cambs., Vice-Chairman; Mr. W. M. Rust, Mr. G. Dawbarn, Mr. J. Leach, Mr. J. Goward, Mr. George A. Peskett, M.A., Mr. W. A. Gill, M.A., and Canon Stokes, M.A. Mr. E. H. Jackson is the Clerk to the Governors, and Mr. A. W. Poyser, M.A., the Head Master.

The Wisbech Barton School has been established for nearly half a century, and has taken a foremost position in promoting education in the neighbourhood. It owes its foundation to Mr. William Redin Stanton (formerly of Grove House School, Wisbech St. Mary), father of the Rev. W. R. Stanton, B.D., rector of West Deeping, and of Mr. Jas. West Stanton, M.A., the present Head Master. Part of the present building (and the ornamental grounds attached to it) was originally the residence of Mr. Jecks, who bestowed much care upon its arrangement. Mr. Stanton added a school room, dormitories, &c., to the house and adapted it to the purposes of a private school. On the death of Mr. Stanton, senior, in 1862, the Rev. W. R. Stanton conducted the School with so much success, that although in many parts of the country public middle class schools were being established, it was felt that in this neighbourhood, Wisbech was already supplied with a well-ordered scholastic establishment which provided a sound commercial education, and prepared with great success its pupils for professional or other examinations. When the Rev. W. R. Stanton was appointed Head Master of the Wisbech Grammar School, his brother, who had been assisting him, undertook the management of the Barton School, and introduced some new features, notably an excellent swimming bath, supplied with tepid water, and consequently available at all times of the year. There are about 100 boys in this school, and it has a large number of friends in Lincolnshire, Norfolk, as well as in this county, many of whom gather to their *Alma Mater* at the annual Review of the Cadet Corps and Athletic Sports, which usually take place in June. When we add that about 800 prizes and certificates have been obtained by pupils of this school in Oxford, Cambridge, London, and other examinations, it will be seen that

the school has achieved excellent results in educational work.

There are other educational establishments in the town, the oldest of which are Glan Dyfi House School, of which Mrs. Lewis is the proprietor, and the Crescent House School, belonging to Miss Wilson. The ladies' and juveniles' schools also comprise those of Miss Gyte, the Misses Digings and Pooley, Miss Musson and Miss Adams, which are successfully conducted, though calling for no special remark in these pages.

A proposal has recently been under consideration for the establishment of a High School for Girls in Wisbech, which would aim at giving a high-class education on undenominational lines, probably financed by a public company, either locally formed, or in connection with some existing educational association. At the time this book was in the press, the proposal had not proceeded beyond the stage of making inquiries as to its practicability, but possibly future developments may lead to some movement in this or a similar direction, which will still further raise the standard of educational efficiency in the town and neighbourhood.

[With regard to the Voluntary Schools mentioned on page 227, it may be remarked that of the amount expended upon the Schools in 1893, viz., £2,045, a sum of £674 was derived from the interest on monies left by benefactors to the Schools and £322 from subscriptions, making £996 in all, so that nearly one half of the total expenditure is met by endowments and subscriptions. The bazaar in aid of the Voluntary Schools was held in the Public Hall, not the Selwyn Hall.]

## CHAPTER XV.

## RELIGIOUS PROGRESS IN THE LAST HALF-CENTURY.

## THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.



WISBECH, as an appanage of the Convent or Monastery of Ely in the eleventh century, was reputed at that time to be "a town of distinctively religious character," and it appears to have retained that characteristic to the present day. In an earlier chapter it has been shown that in Wisbech Castle the bitter rivalry of religious factions obtained for the town a considerable fame, and that in this State Prison, Papists and Protestants were immured, according to the faith of the ruling power at the time, Queen Elizabeth visiting upon the Papists like punishments to those which the Protestants had suffered under her sister Mary. A story is told of an illiterate and persecuted priest named Barkworth, who, when tried in London, was put to his wits' end to defend himself against the arguments advanced by the prosecution. The Old Bailey Judge sarcastically proposed that he should be tried by a jury of his fellow-priests, upon which the accused impatiently replied, "That is right; your Lordship knows full well that a complete jury of them may be found in Wisbech Castle." We are not told whether he was relegated to the tender mercies of the priests of Wisbech Castle to be tried there, but to judge from the number who died or suffered martyrdom in this prison, the reference to that prison was hardly a wise one to make if he valued his life at all. However those days of intolerance and bitter animosity

have happily given place to an age of greater charity and a deeper respect for divergent opinions. The beginning of the present century, indeed, indicated a considerable improvement in this direction, a change to which one local historian refers. Mr. William Richards, in his *History of Lynn*, written in 1812, has the following :—

To have among its inhabitants so many different religious societies or sects can be no real reproach to Wisbech. The exercise of free inquiry and unrestrained judgment and decision in matters of religion, must be the undoubted unalienable birthright of every rational being, nor can a diversity of religious sentiments or persuasions be in any way detrimental to the welfare of the community, provided all parties were earnestly to concur in promoting general harmony and goodwill among their fellow citizens.

The present chapter will be devoted to reviewing the ecclesiastical changes affecting the Church of England in the parishes of Wisbech St. Peter and St. Augustine, whilst a succeeding chapter will refer to those concerning the various Nonconformist sections, which are numerous represented in Wisbech. To revert to the beginning of this century, the generous benefactions of Dr. Abraham Jobson, who succeeded Dr. Cæsar Morgan in 1802 will naturally occupy attention. When Dr. Jobson entered upon the living, it was then commuted at about £700 per annum, but the new Vicar made a formal demand of all the tithes in kind of the grass lands, the owners and occupiers of which had set up a claim that they were exempted. Litigation resulted and after five years' thus spent, Dr. Jobson succeeded in establishing his claim in the Higher Courts—a decision which increased the income of the living to about £2,000 per annum. One result of this was that Dr. Jobson was extremely liberal in his gifts while he was Vicar. Amongst other donations, he contributed £500 towards the establishment of the Boys' Charity School; £100 towards a Girls' School; £500 to found a Church Sunday School; £100 each to the neighbouring churches of Doddington, March, and Benwick, beside erecting galleries in Wisbech St. Peter's Church. But his most generous act was the endowment of the Chapel of Ease with real estate of the value of £5,000, besides taking 20 shares of £50 each in the undertaking. In 1823, during his life time, the inhabitants subscribed for his portrait, painted by Strutt, which occupies a conspicuous place in the Town Hall. On Dr. Jobson's death in 1830, the Rev. Henry Fardell, who was a son-in-law of the Bishop of Ely, succeeded him. Mr. Fardell, in addition to the two livings of Wisbech and Waterbeach, near



Cambridge, also held a Canonry of Ely. He held several public offices and was Chairman of the Isle of Ely Quarter Sessions (presiding alternately with the Rev. W. Gale Townley, of Upwell), and also Chairman of the Board of Guardians. He was buried in Ely Cathedral, where a memorial window has been erected in the choir, and also one to his widow. On his decease in March, 1854, the living of Wisbech St. Peter, which exceeded £2,000 in value at that time, was divided by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners into two parts, viz., Wisbech St. Mary, made into a separate parish of the value of £900, to which the Rev. Henry Jackson, M.A. (at that time Curate of Leverington) was presented, and Wisbech St. Peter, then valued at £1,200, but now considerably diminished, given to the Rev. William Bonner Hopkins, B.D., Fellow of St. Catherine's College, Cambridge. When Mr. Hopkins entered upon the living in 1854, some lack of organization and consequent apathy had existed, until a few years previously, in the matter of religious and parish work, and his institution to the Vicarage of Wisbech proved to be the beginning of a greater period of activity and of vigorous work in the parish. The Rev. Canon Copeman (father of Mr. A. Copeman, solicitor, Wisbech), who was for three years curate of Wisbech, partly during the time that the Rev. H. Fardell was Vicar, and for the last two years in association with Mr. Hopkins, when presented with a testimonial in June, 1856, in recognition of his constant attention to the poor and his unremitting exertions during the prevalence of cholera, remarked that when he first came to Wisbech, the Church's fortunes in it seemed to be at the lowest ebb, and the state of the material temple in which they worshipped was such as to rouse the deepest sense of indignation in every man capable of feeling for the honour of God's House. The sole machinery at work for the enlightenment of adult inhabitants belonging to their communion consisted of church services, from which the poor were virtually excluded. Mr. Copeman promoted the restoration of the Church, the unsightly galleries being removed, and more convenient accommodation provided. But his best work, he used to say, when afterwards elected to the Vicarage of St. Andrew's, Norwich, and to a honorary Canonry of the Cathedral, was the opportunity given him at Wisbech of attending to the dying and dead in the cholera epidemic of 1854. Many fled from the town until the cholera was over, but Mr. Copeman who had taken his degrees and diploma as a doctor before entering the Church, brought his skill and knowledge to bear in relieving suffering humanity under these dreadful conditions. His heroism



*To The Rev. Canon Manning D.D. Vicar of Wisbeach, &c.*  
*This View of the Church of WISBEACH ST. PETERS, on the Site of St. Cambridgeshire,*  
*is most respectfully transmitted by his parish of St. Peter and Paul, &c.*  
*The original which was first printed in the year 1740, and was revised about A.D. 1840.*  
*Published at the Rev. Canon Manning's Press, near Wisbeach, Cambridgeshire.*



was shared by a semi-idiot, who followed him for days with a barrow, removing the sick and dying to a temporary hospital, and collecting the dead when nobody else would undertake the task. At a meeting held at the Town Hall in June, 1853, under the presidency of the Mayor (Mr. J. E. Fraser), the Rev. A. C. Copeman urged the removal of the galleries in the Parish Church. A sum of £356 was collected for the purpose. One of the earliest efforts of Mr. Hopkins was in the direction of promoting this restoration of the Parish Church, the fabric having fallen into a condition that suggested the desirability of considerable alterations to make it convenient for public worship. The restoration was commenced in March, 1856, and was carried out with discretion, removing many unsightly portions and preserving the more beautiful features of the fabric. The works were designed by Mr. Bassett-Smith, and were carried out under the supervision of a committee, at a cost of £4,200. The pews and galleries were removed, oak benches were fitted, the mutilated chancel roof was restored, an east window was put in by Mr. Cottam to the memory of his only son, the organ was removed to the side chancel, and exterior improvements, in the shape of removal of the accumulations outside the walls, were carried out. Previous to this Mr. Hopkins had submitted a plan of subscriptions and seat-rents in order to avoid the contentious and objectionable church-rates, whilst providing for the cost of the necessary restoration works. This conciliatory step was met by Messrs. Peckover and other Nonconformists subscribing to the repairs of the clock in the tower. Canon Hopkins' personal popularity, both in the parish and in the pulpit, created a great interest in Church work, and although one or two controversial matters arose—notably the discussion of the question of the Workhouse chaplaincy at the Board of Guardians during his chairmanship, and the refusal to allow the bells to be rung on the occasion of a Nonconformist Sunday School Festival, which provoked a lively indignation meeting—there was a general expression of regret, and a ready response made by Churchmen and Nonconformists to a testimonial gift, when Mr. Hopkins left after twelve years of useful work in the parish and from considerations of health undertook the vicarage of Littleport.

The Church of St. Peter and St. Paul has always been an object of interest to archæologists, chiefly from the peculiarities of its construction, its great length and breadth, its double nave and chancel, and the fact that it offers examples of almost every kind of ecclesiastical architecture from the latter end of the twelfth to

the beginning of the seventeenth century. It is a popular tradition that Wisbech St. Peter's Church was built in "the four ones"—viz., the year 1111. In all probability, remarked the Rev. John Davies, M.A., in his lecture on "Local Antiquities," the first stone was laid in 1111, although there had been a Church prior to that date. In the flood of 1236, the Church was partially destroyed, this accounting for the different styles of architecture in its construction. One half was swept away while the other was preserved. For the sake of economy, the one side was left while the other half was rebuilt in the style then prevailing. The characteristics of this interesting Church have already been fully described in previous histories and archæological works, so that it is only necessary to refer briefly to its general features. It is somewhat of a puzzle to students of architecture. Originally, as to its shape and size, it was a typical Norman ecclesiastical building, but now the early tower standing at the west end has been removed, and only the Norman arcade dividing the nave and side aisles remains. The original nave has been widened and a second, separated from its fellow by columns and arches of Late Perpendicular work, is added, the two naves and side aisles constituting a square of about 82 feet, the extreme length of the Church being 150 feet. It is one of the three double-naved churches in the kingdom, but the peculiarity in Wisbech is that the two naves, of which the southern is much the broader, are embraced under one roof, the western juncture of the gables being connected by a buttress, ending in a well corbelled bell-turret. Each nave has an external aisle, and at the east end are two great chancels.\*

\* The Rev. W. B. Hopkins in a paper read before the members of the Norfolk and Norwich Archæological Society when they visited Wisbech in July, 1855 (under the presidency of Sir W. B. Ffolkes) remarked upon the seemingly unreasonable length of the chancel, and pointed out that in the 14th century the internal Norman arcade with its clerestory, at this time running along the centre of the Church, must have made all the building north of that arcade extremely dark and gloomy. But the architect of that time was probably unwilling to remove the old Church, and by the addition of a spacious new nave and chapel, and a very large chancel, he provided enough accommodation for the worshippers to enable them to dispense, for the most part, with the oldest parts of the structure. Probably the darkness and discomfort of so large a part of the building would be increasingly felt as the ritual grew more gorgeous and processional in character, and led to the latest sweeping alteration of the Church at the end of the 15th or the beginning of the 16th century. A review of the architectural changes of the Church, based on the observations of Mr. Edward Freeman, and Mr. (afterwards Sir) George Gilbert Scott was given, and it was intimated that the restoration was about to be undertaken in a manner worthy of a building possessing so many striking features of interest as their venerable Parish Church.

Almost detached, at the north-west angle, is a pinnaced tower, of massive ashlar work, ornamented with bands and carved stone panels, erected in the reign of Henry VII or Henry VIII. Although debased by the lateness of the style, yet from its design and ornamentation it is by no means destitute of beauty. Its most striking feature is the handsome doorway, which assumes almost the proportions of a gateway, though it is strange, that in a building of such size and pretensions, the porch is not vaulted. From the flat roof rises the steeple, a lead covered spire, the total height being about 130 feet. On entering the Church, the naves are seen to have distinct and very simple oak ceilings crossed by numerous beams. The three arcades are dissimilar, the northern one being First Transitional, with circular columns and chamfered caps, the central one, light grouped piers and shafts of the pattern usual in the Nene Valley throughout the fourth century, while the arcade between the south nave and its aisle is supported by clustered shafts with deep bells, moulds, and caps. At the west end of the north nave, which is the narrower and obviously more ancient of the two, are the piers and responds of an incomplete tower. The two chancels are of nearly similar size, and a skew arch has been thrown across the east end of the north nave to connect the nave and its wider chancel. When the restoration of the Church was undertaken in 1855, the opinion of Sir George Gilbert Scott (brother of the late Canon Scott, Vicar of the parish) was taken, as to the treatment of the roof that he would recommend—whether the external roofs should be made separate, and if the internal oak ceilings ought to be removed. The advice given was followed out in the restoration, and when the British Archæological Society visited Wisbech in 1878, satisfaction was expressed that the oak ceilings had been repaired instead of being removed. During the restoration, the bases of the Norman arcade to which Sir Gilbert Scott had referred in his report, were found beneath the base of the present central arcade and concealed by the flooring. The great tower was probably built by John Morton, the clerical engineer of the Fen drains, who lived for a short time at Wisbech Castle, and became successively Bishop of Ely and Archbishop of Canterbury. Upon one of the chief panels are the arms of the Sees of Canterbury and Ely. The late Dean Howson contributed an excellent description of the Church to a valuable work entitled *The Fen and Marshland Churches*, published by Messrs. Leach and Son, which gives historical and architectural notes, illustrated by photographs, of the more interesting ecclesiastic edifices of the neighbourhood. He writes:—

The arms of the See of Ely can be traced in more places than one, as well as the keys of St. Peter and the two swords of St. Paul. This is one of the 230 churches in England that are dedicated to these two Apostles. One peculiar and interesting corner of the Church is the complicated group of arches at the north-east corner of the principal nave. It has been observed that the chancel is wider than the nave. The junction is effected most ingeniously by an arch thrown across obliquely in the Decorated time from the Norman pier, while the clerestory wall above is continued nearly in a straight line by help of an arch of the Perpendicular time. At this point the pulpit is placed so conveniently that the preacher commands the north aisle, as well as the whole space of the interior to the west and south.

*Enland Notes and Queries* says of this tower:—\*

It is much adorned on every side, especially towards the top, with coats of arms exceedingly well carved. At the north side of the steeple towards the summit are these devices:— In the middle the Royal arms of England and France on a large shield supported by an angel under a canopy. Above this may be seen a T and M crowned, and at the bottom corner of the upper storey, under the T the arms of the See of Canterbury. T may possibly be the initial of Thomas Goodrich, one of the revisers of the authorized version of the New Testament, and probably the Bishop of Ely at the time the tower was completed; whilst M undoubtedly is the initial of the surname of Archbishop Morton, created Cardinal in 1493, who was sometime Bishop of Ely and builder of the Second Castle at Wisbech. The device in a corresponding position beneath the M is also mitred and has a coat of arms quarterly, considered to be Cardinal Morton's. On the ridge below the window are seven curious shields. Of these the first bears the arms of France and England; the nature of the second is uncertain; the third device is the Cross Keys, the emblem of S. Peter; the fourth shield bears the arms of the See of Ely supported by an angel; the character of the sixth device is uncertain; whilst the seventh shield bears the arms of the See of Ely impaling those of Cardinal Morton, mitred; beneath these, in the corners of the arch of the belfry door, are two other shields, the first, keys in saltier (the arms of S. Peter) and the second, swords in saltier (the arms of S. Paul.) The other sides of the tower bear devices of equally interesting character, the buttresses are very substantial, whilst the pinnacles at the four corners of the summit, the balustrading together with the intermediate pinnacles thereon, and the central dwarf spire, are all both interesting and curious. It is probable that the tower was commenced *circa* 1520, at which time Nicholas West was Bishop of Ely, and completed *circa* 1538 during the episcopate of Thomas Goodrich, who subsequently became Lord Chancellor of England.

Some discussion took place among the members of the British Archæological Society when it visited Wisbech, as to the communion table, a ponderous framework of oak, wherein is set a

\* Vol. i. p. 73.

narrow slab of Purbeck marble, on which are incised three rude crosses. It was argued that this might be the pre-Reformation table let into a later table, but the theory was questioned, as the crosses did not look genuine, nor were they the right shape or number, being but three in lieu of five. It was however, regarded as a table of the time of William III, and the one in the Vestry, of lighter construction, was probably the Caroline table.

The Parish Church contains an ancient and excellent brass of large size and artistic design, although it has fallen into a state of partial decay. It commemorates the death of Sir Thomas de Braunstone, who was Constable of Wisbech Castle, and died in 1401. He is represented in armour under a Decorated canopy wearing a bascinet, without a vizor, and having a neck-guard of chain. The body is covered with a surcoat or breastplate with long taches, and the legs are protected by greaves. Around the slab there was formerly an inscription in French, which unfortunately appears to have been nearly worn away, but originally was as follows:—

Cy gist Thomas de Braunstone, jadis Conestable du Chastel de Wisebeche, qui moruit le vingt septisme jour de Mai l'an de notre Seignore Mil CCCC primer DLalme de qui Dieu par sa grace ait merci Amen.

This interesting brass deserves restoration (which would probably not be very costly) and ought not to be long delayed. "The monumental brasses of Cambridgeshire" writes the late Mr. J. Sparvel-Bayley, F.S.A., a member of the Cambridge University Association of Brass Collectors, and a well-known authority, "rich as they are in ecclesiastical and knightly figures, compare very favourably both in design and execution with those remaining in any part of the kingdom, and are well worthy of that loving care which it is the honour and privilege of our age to bestow upon the relics of the past. Long may the churchwardens and other legal custodians of these ancient and artistic memorials of the dead exercise their power and authority to preserve them from desecration and injury, allowing at the same time reasonable access for the antiquarians to perform their simple and harmless operation of rubbing."

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1774, vol. 44, it is recorded that a stone was found in the churchyard of Clifford parish (Herefordshire), and a facsimile is given of the inscription which is nearly the same as the above. The stone which was three feet long and two feet broad, was about two feet below the surface.



The translation of the characters, which were very indistinct, was as follows:—"Here lies Thomas de Braunstone, late Constable of the Castle of Wisbech, who died the 27th day of May, in the year of Lord, 1401, the first of Henry IV, on whom God, of his grace, have mercy."

The monuments to members of the Southwell family are rich, and one over the door of the south chancel has a chaste and skilfully executed figure of Hope, which is said to be from the chisel of Nollekens, the most celebrated English sculptor of his age. The figure bears evidence of a masterly hand, and a story of this sculptor, quoted by the Lord Bishop of Ripon, the Right Rev. W. Boyd Carpenter,\* illustrates the high reputation he enjoyed in that branch of art. In the Senate House at Cambridge, there is a statue of William Pitt, by Nollekens. When the great statesman died, the University of Cambridge desired to possess his statue. They approached Canova, the greatest sculptor of his time, but Canova replied, in chivalrous fashion, that so long as a sculptor of the eminence of Nollekens existed in England he could not undertake the work. In consequence of this, Nollekens was asked to accept the commission. But here a difficulty arose. Nollekens had never seen Pitt. This obstacle, however, was met by the intervention of Sir Benjamin West, who possessed a sketch of William Pitt, which commemorated an important scene in English history. During the illness of King George IV, William Pitt had found that hindrances were thrown in his way so that he could not always get an audience of the King. He insisted on the right of the Prime Minister to have access to the Throne, and in order to show his right, he travelled to Windsor, forced his way into the Royal apartment and gained an audience of the King. On his return, as he descended the slope from the Castle, he met Sir Benjamin West and greeted him. The painter was struck by the proud dignity and the conscious triumph which glowed in the statesman's face, and he drew a sketch to perpetuate his reminiscences of the moment when he had seen William Pitt in the hour of such a triumph. That sketch became the basis of Nollekens' work, and those who look upon the statue in the Senate House at Cambridge, may see traces of the courage and triumph of that hour, and will regard one of his most successful achievements with the greater interest because of the memory of the historical incident associated with its origin.

\* Address on the "Use of Life," given at the Birmingham and Midland Institute by the Right Rev. Wm. Boyd Carpenter, D.D., Lord Bishop of Ripon, October 22nd, 1895.

The memory of Colonel Watson, one of the historians of Wisbech is perpetuated in the inscription on a white marble tablet in the Church as follows:—

Sacred to the memory of William Watson, F.A.S., Lieutenant-Colonel of the Cambridgeshire Local Militia, Deputy Lieutenant and Chief Bailiff of the Isle of Ely. His death took place at Richmond in Surrey, on the 31st day of March, in the 64th year of his age, and his remains were interred in a vault beneath this tablet, on the 8th day of April, 1834. In life this amiable man was honoured and beloved by all classes, and in death lamented. In him the poor never wanted a friend, the embarrassed an adviser, the good a pattern. His faith was entirely built upon the merits of the Saviour's atonement, and the evidence of it was daily visible in the consistency of a holy life.

One epitaph in the Church is as follows:—

Beneath a sleeping infant lies,  
To earth her body lent,  
Hereafter shall more glorious rise,  
But scarce more innocent.  
And when the Angel's trump shall sound,  
And souls to bodies join,  
Millions shall wish their lives below,  
Had been as short as thine.

Upon the floor of the chancel of the Church, which is nearly paved with monumental slabs, is the epitaph on Nicholas Sandford, before alluded to.

The Rev. James Ashley, a native of Wisbech, and rector of Fleet, composed some lines to the memory of his brother, which are inscribed on a tablet, commencing as follows:—

Has death enwrapp'd thee in this cloud of night,  
Whilst youth, hope, pleasure, gleamed their cheerful ray?  
So fades Aurora's ineffectual light  
When the pale morning blushes into day.

There are three other stanzas and also four on another tablet to the memory of his mother. We are told that there was originally a small chantry or chapel on the west side of the north entrance, dedicated to St. Martin, and anciently endowed with lands for the maintenance of a priest, who was to say masses for the soul of the founder. But the images, shrines, altars, &c., in this chantry were demolished pursuant to Bishop Goodrich's injunction, dated at Ely, 1541. Amongst other monuments is one to Mathias Taylor, a linen draper of Wisbech, who from a humble origin acquired a large estate by his honest industry, and was chosen not only to be a Capital

Burgess, but was made a Justice of the Peace for the Isle of Ely and had the Constableness of the Castle conferred upon him. The inscription includes the sentence "Virtue excels every escutcheon." A handsome monument of marble and alabaster is to the memory of members of the Parke family, one of whom was a benefactor to Wisbech Charities. In the year 1750, an inscription on the east wall of the Church (effaced by the erection of a monument) commemorated a remarkable inundation that happened in 1613 and 1614, the substance of which monument was as follows:—

To the immortal Praise of God, 'Be it in memory, that on the first of November, 1613, in the night, the sea came in by the violence of a north-east wind, meeting a spring tide, and overflowed all Marshland and the town of Wisbech, both on the north and south sides, and almost the whole hundred round about, to the great danger of men's lives, with the loss of some by the breach of banks,\* &c., beside the spoil of corn, cattle, and houses, which could not be estimated. The year after, on the twenty-ninth of March, it was again overflowed by the fresh water, which came by a great snow, that not only the south side of this town, but the greater part of the ground within South Eau bank, in Holland, from Spalding to Tyd St. Giles was almost lost for that year; with a great part of Marshland, from their bank called the Edge, between the towns and smeech of their new dike by divers breaches between Salter's Lode and Downham Bridge.'

The organ in the Parish Church which was described in January, 1857, when the Church was re-opened after restoration, as "an old and valuable instrument, the work of the celebrated builders Harris and Greene," was erected in 1789 at a cost of £500. It had been preceded by one built in 1711 by C. Quarles, of Cambridge. The later instrument consisted of three parts—great organ, choir and swell—containing 21 stops, the best being the diapasons of the great organ which were said to have been intended for an organ at the Chapel Royal, Windsor, in course of erection at the same time, but Mr. Greene finding them so well adapted to the Wisbech instrument brought them here. In 1873, the Wisbech organ very much needed repair and was deficient in several particulars, although parts of it were still valuable. Messrs. Forster and Andrews, of Hull, were consequently commissioned to reconstruct it, retaining some of the old parts, providing new mechanism, adding a pedal organ, in which respect it was before deficient, and inserting a new swell organ extending over a larger compass. New stops were added in both the great and choir organs, and the old pipes were put in order. A new

\* The Roman Bank would be the *sea* one.

oak case, designed by Mr. Bassett-Smith, the architect by whom the Church was restored, was provided, the entire cost of the work being £650. The specification of the organ may be given as follows:—

## GREAT ORGAN—CC TO G.

				FEET.		PIPES.
1.	Double Diapason	...	...	16	...	56
2.	Large open Diapason	.	...	8	...	56
3.	Small open Diapason...	...	...	8	...	56
4.	Stopped Diapason Bass	...	...	8	...	24
5.	Stopped Diapason Treble	..	...	8	...	32
6.	Hohlflöte...	...	...	8	...	32
7.	Principal...	...	...	4	...	56
8.	Harmonic Flute	...	...	—	...	56
9.	Twelfth	...	...	2½	...	56
10.	Fifteenth	...	...	2	...	56
11.	Mixture—three ranks	...	...	—	...	168
12.	Trumpet	...	...	—	...	56

704

## PEDAL ORGAN—CCC TO F.

1.	Open Diapason...	...	...	16	...	56
2.	Bourdon	...	...	16	...	30
3.	Violincello	...	...	8	...	30

90

## SWELL ORGAN—CC TO G.

1.	Bourdon	...	...	16	...	56
2.	Open Diapason...	...	...	8	...	56
3.	Stopped ditto	...	...	8	...	56
4.	Salicional	...	...	8	...	56
5.	Principal...	...	...	4	...	56
6.	Mixture—three ranks	...	...	—	...	168
7.	Horn	...	...	8	...	56
8.	Oboe	...	...	8	...	56

560

## CHOIR ORGAN—CC TO G.

1.	Small Open Diapason	...	...	8	...	56
2.	Flute d'Amour	...	...	8	...	36
3.	Stopped Diapason	...	...	8	...	56
4.	Principal...	...	...	4	...	56
5.	Flute	...	...	4	...	56
6.	Fifteenth	...	...	2	...	56
7.	Clarionet	...	...	8	...	44

380

Total number of Stops 30; Pipes 1,734.

## COUPLERS.

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Swell to Great.                       | 4. Swell to Choir.  |
| 2. Swell to Pedals.                      | 5. Great to Pedals. |
| 3. Swell Octave.                         | 6. Choir to Pedals. |
| Three Composition Pedals to Great Organ. |                     |
| Three                                    | „ „ Swell Organ.    |

The opening took place on January 22nd, 1874, Dr. Woodford (who had only been installed as Bishop of Ely two days before) preaching a sermon in the Parish Church in the morning of that day and Canon Hopkins in the evening. Mr. Turner, the organist, led the services morning and evening, and in the afternoon Mr. W. Amps, M.A., organist of King's College, Cambridge, gave an organ recital, and on the following day Mr. Porter, organist of Louth Parish Church, similarly illustrated the capabilities of the instrument. The organ as it stands cannot by any means be considered perfect, notwithstanding the fact that it possesses great and even exceptional points of merit. The improvements that might be suggested are (1) the reducing of the present discrepancy between the power of the Great and Swell organs by the addition of an extra reed and more flute work to the latter, (2) the addition of a trombone or posaune to the Pedal organ, and (3) the application of gas or hydraulic power for the more adequate supplying of wind. Could these additions be carried out, Wisbech would possess an instrument well-nigh complete in itself, thoroughly commensurate with the noble building in which it stands, and one of which the town might be justly proud. The position, however, is not a good one, being placed too close to the wall of the end of the south Chancel and if brought more forward to the the Chancel arch, the effect would be greatly improved. Amongst those who have fulfilled the duties of organist are Mr. Turner, Mr. C. B. King, Mr. Norman Hibbert, F.R.C.O., Mr. Skafte, and Mr. Joseph S. Smith, A.R.C.O., the present holder of that appointment. When the organ was rebuilt in 1873, preparations were made for the addition of two new stops—Harmonic flute and Salicional—the former in the great organ and the latter in the swell organ, in place of Flute d'Amour placed in the choir organ. These alterations were made some twelve years later, when the organ was thoroughly repaired and reopened in June, 1895, when Mr. W. H. Jude, a former Wisbechian, but now eminent in his profession at Liverpool, gave a recital.

The sun-dial on the south porch has recently been restored, and is a conspicuous feature to those passing through the church-yard. Above the face is the motto—*Pereunt et imputantur*, which

may be freely translated, "The hours perish and are reckoned,"\* or as is inscribed at greater length on a dial at Minster Court, Kent, where the legend runs—*Tempora labuntur quae nobis pereunt et imputantur*—"Time glides by, which perishes for us and is reckoned." The vertical dial has a gilded style or gnomon, with Roman numerals, and radiating lines. The date of the dial is probably later than the porch. The room above this porch was formerly used as a parish library, and previous to that time, for the storage of arms to be used in case of any invasion or local disturbances arising.

The registers of the Parish of Wisbech St. Peter are in excellent condition and well preserved. *Fenland Notes and Queries* of October, 1896, states that the first five books carry the entries to the end of the eighteenth century, and include three years of the present century. They are well bound in folio volumes, each containing baptisms, marriages, and deaths. Volume 1 comprises 1558—1652; vol. 2, 1653—1713; vol. 3, 1713—1745; vol. 4, 1746—1785; vol. 5, 1786—1803. The first volume is written entirely in Latin, and the inductions of three vicars, Matthew Champion (1586), Joshua Blaxton (1612), and Thomas Emmerson (1615), are recorded at great length. The earliest entry is July 15th, 1558, and the first burial April 11th, 1559. The second volume begins in English, but Latin is resumed in 1661, and continues to the end of the book.

In February, 1869, the death of the Rev. John Henry Sparke, M.A., Canon of Ely, Chancellor of the Diocese, Rector of Gunthorpe, Norfolk, and Leverington, took place in his 76th year. He had been presented to the Rectory of Leverington and Parson Drove, the gross value of which was £2,400 a year, by his father, the Bishop of Ely, in 1827. His canonry was worth £800 and the living of Gunthorpe £700 per annum, whilst there were fees attaching to the Chancellorship in addition. It was calculated that from Leverington and Parson Drove alone, Canon Sparke had received during the 43 years of his rectory £103,000, and the rector being seldom in residence, the Rev. F. Jackson held the perpetual curacy of Parson Drove, as it was then called, and the Revs. Henry Jackson and A. W. Roper the curacy of Leverington. At the time of his death Canon Sparke had undertaken to build a new church at Gorefield at a cost of £2,000, and this edifice was then in course of erection. The vacancy in the living of Leverington afforded the opportunity for

\* Another rendering is:—"The hours pass away but are placed to our account."

an important ecclesiastical change, and in the Session of 1870 the Leverington Rectory Bill was promoted, the standing orders being suspended on the petition of the Bishop of Ely, who had sketched the plan for the redistribution of revenues and the re-arrangement of the parish, in order to provide more efficiently for the requirements of the district. On the 19th of April, 1870, a meeting of the inhabitants of Leverington, Newton, Wisbech St. Mary, and Wisbech St. Peter, was held at the Rose and Crown Hotel, Wisbech, to consider a Bill "for making better provision for the cure of souls within the parish of Leverington, and of certain adjacent parishes in the Diocese of Ely." The Ven. Archdeacon Emery attended as the Bishop of Ely's representative, and presided. The Chairman explained that the Bishop had asked Canon Hopkins, Mr. Edward Jackson, and himself, to assist him in the details of the scheme, and Dr. Corrie, Rector of Newton, had also been consulted. The scheme proposed to form five parishes, and also a sixth that did not appear in the Bill—St. Augustine's (Wisbech), Leverington proper, Gorefield (taking in Fitton End), Parson Drove, Southa-cum-Murrow, and Guyhirn. The effect of the Bill would be that St. Augustine's (where Dr. Howson had commenced the erection of a Church, continued by Canon Scott) would be a separate parish, Leverington contributing £200 a year, the Vicar of Wisbech St. Peter £100 a year, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners £100 a year and £1,000 towards a house, Leverington revenues supplying another £500 for the vicarage—making £400 a year with house. Leverington would have a gross rent charge of £900 a year, Fitton End, with tithe amounting to £236 would be detached from Newton, and £100 a year additional taken from that living, leaving the income at about £1,000. Leverington would contribute £346 and with the £336 from Newton, Gorefield would have a gross income of about £700, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners contributing £1,000 for a house. Parson Drove, which was a chapelry, had an endowment of £250, and £150 would be added from Leverington, making it £400. The new parish of Southa would have an income of £800 allotted to it, from which £100 would go to the payment of a curate for Murrow. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners were to give £1,000 for a house, and £500 would be taken from the Leverington revenues. The revenues would be charged with £2,000 towards a new church for Southa, at the west end of Parson Drove. The sixth parish that did not appear in the Bill was that of Guyhirn, including Ring's End, on the south side of the river. Wisbech St. Peter



# WISBECH CHURCHES.

ST. PETER'S CHURCH.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S, INTERIOR.

OCTAGON CHURCH, OR C

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ACCORDING TO THE  
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was to give £60, Wisbech St. Mary £60, and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners £100; and there was an endowment which was of the value of £80 but had increased to £109, in consequence of the railway having purchased the original land, and the money had been reinvested. This would make it about £330, and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners would probably provide a parsonage. The population of the ecclesiastical parishes under the Bill would be:—Leverington 600, Gorefield 600, Southea-cum-Murrow 1,070, and St. Augustine's 4,000. The costs of the Bill were to be paid out of the accumulated profits of the benefice of Leverington during the vacancy. The thanks of the meeting were voted to the Bishop of Ely, for his great interest in promoting the spiritual welfare of the district, to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the supervisors of the Parson Drove Trust. The Leverington Rectory Bill became law the same session, and the Act came into operation in the following August.

The work of the Church in Wisbech was thus further stimulated by the formation of the new parish of St. Augustine. The Church had been actually built some time before this Leverington Rectory Act provided for its endowment, as well as for the building of a vicarage. The effort which resulted in its erection was commenced by the Rev. W. B. Hopkins, who with Mr. W. G. Jackson and Mr. Richard Young took the matter up with energy. The Rev. John Saul Howson, D.D., one of the authors of Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, who succeeded Canon Hopkins, gave the proposal a great impetus in the belief that the Eastfield district of Wisbech, being a populous part of a large parish, needed a more direct spiritual oversight. At first a piece of ground in the neighbourhood of the river was contemplated for the erection of a church, but ultimately, a site on the south side of the Lynn Road, adjacent to the new roadway (afterwards known as Monica Road), given by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, was thought to be more suitable. When the Rev. John Scott, rector of Tydd St. Giles, was presented to the Vicarage of Wisbech, he succeeded Dr. Howson as chairman of the St. Augustine's Building Committee, and took a most active interest in the erection of the church. The Dean of Chester (Dr. Howson) returned to Wisbech about a year after his vacating the living, and in May 19th, 1868, laid the first stone of the edifice, receiving on that occasion a silver trowel for the purpose, and on May 11th, 1869, nearly a year later, the Church was consecrated by the Bishop of Ely. Viscount Royston, M.P., and the Viscountess,

Lord George Manners, M.P., and Lady Adeliza Manners, the Dean of Chester (Dr. Howson), Canon Hopkins, the Rev. J. W. Bellamy, and others attended the opening service. After the consecration, a luncheon took place in a tent in the Vicarage grounds. The Church consists of nave, with clerestory and high pitched open timbered roof, north and south aisles, chancel without aisles, but with an arch on the south side opening into the vestry, the style adopted being a modification of Gothic of the latter part of the 13th century. The stone pulpit with red Italian marble columns and alabaster top was, with the prayer desk and lectern, given by the Rev. J. W. Bellamy, of Sellindge, Kent, and the font by the Rev. S. C. Scott and his relatives. Mr. Bassett-Smith, of the Adelphi, London, was the architect, and Messrs. Law and Son, Lutterworth, the contractors, the cost of the Church being about £4,000. The organ in the chancel of St. Augustine's Church was erected soon after the building of the Church, and was supplied by Messrs. Foster and Andrews, of Hull. The instrument has eight stops to the great organ; five stops to the swell; and one stop to the pedal. The accessories include two pedal couplers and one coupler, swell to great. Mr. H. Davis, Head Master of the New Walsoken Schools, is the organist.

During the last few years many additions have been made to the interior decorations of both St. Peter's and St. Augustine's Churches. In the former, Mr. J. W. Shepherd recognising the desirability of a suitable decoration for the east end of the chancel presented a handsome reredos of stone, alabaster, and Florentine mosaic, the principal feature in which is a mosaic copy of Leonardo de Vinci's celebrated picture in the convent of Santa-Maria-del-Gracie, Milan, of the "Last Supper," with canopied figures of St. Peter on one side and St. Paul on the other. Like the mosaics in Westminster Abbey and Chester Cathedral, there is a little variation from the original picture, which has been blurred and marred by the mischances of 400 years, the room in which it now is, being used as a cavalry barrack! The mosaic copy was executed in Venice by Salviati, from a design by Messrs. Clayton and Bell, and the stone and alabaster work was arranged by Mr. Bassett-Smith, by whom the restoration of the Church was carried out in 1856-7, and who was also the architect of St. Augustine's Church. The revered memory of Canon Scott, who was Vicar when these additions were made, and who died while fulfilling that office, has been perpetuated by the erection of a stained glass window in the Church, and windows

have also been added to the memory of Dr. Smith Burman, and Mr. Robert Batterham, a former churchwarden, erected from a legacy left by his son. Amongst other improvements a new clock has been placed in the tower, having been fixed by Mr. James Dann at a cost of about £400, but its utility is diminished by the fixing of skeleton dials, in order to show the carved stone-work over which it is placed. The clock has Denison's double three-legged gravity escapement, with train remontoir and compensated pendulum 15 feet long, weighing  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cwt. So accurate is the compensation that the going rate of the clock is within a minute per year. The clock chimes the Cambridge quarters and strikes the hours on the large tenor bell. A heating apparatus on the high pressure system has been added, by Messrs. Perkins, at a cost of about £200, which answers admirably and greatly increases the comfort of the worshippers in this spacious edifice. The Church has about 1,500 sittings, half of which are free. The living is a vicarage, the average tithe rent charge of which is £885, and net yearly value £530, with 42 acres of glebe and residence. It is in the gift of the Bishop of Ely, and has been held since 1886 by the Rev. Robert Edward Reginald Watts, M.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge. The churchwardens (1896) are Messrs. J. Leach and W. Bray.

An ancient custom has been perpetuated, not only during the present century, but for more than 800 years, viz., the tolling of the curfew bell from the tower of the Parish Church from a quarter before nine to nine each evening. Probably there are not a great many towns in which this remnant of a Norman custom has been so long observed. Its origin is said to be even earlier than William the Conqueror, for it was a custom among the convents of the North before this to put out their fires on the ringing of a bell. William the Conqueror made the custom general in England by enacting that everyone should put out lights and fires on the ringing of the eight o'clock evening bell. The law was repealed in 1100 by Henry I, but some few towns like Wisbech have maintained the practice to the present time. Sixty years ago, a writer remarks of this custom:—"In a few years this relic of antiquity of which Wisbech can boast will probably be lost, but whilst Gray's immortal *Elegy* and Milton's *Il Penseroso* survive, the curfew should never cease to swing with sullen roar, as it tolls the knell of parting day." It has not ceased at Wisbech yet, and a custom so ancient should not be allowed to lapse into disuse. A kind of matin bell, often called the "workmen's bell" tolls from a quarter before, to six o'clock in the morning. This is

confirmed by an entry in the Corporation Records in 1662, which ordered that the Town Bailiff should cause a close bed and bedstead to be set up in the Church steeple for the bellman, for ringing the bell at four o'clock in the morning! Later, it is ordered, in the same record, that morning prayer be read in the Parish Church, as of ancient time, the same hath been, after the tolling of the bell at six o'clock in the morning. The tower contains ten bells and chiming apparatus. Originally there were only eight, but Dr. Jobson presented two in 1823, the oldest one of the eight (which were recast) dating from 1566. The whole peal weighs 5 tons 2 qrs. 5 lbs., the tenor bell alone weighing 1 ton 1 cwt. 2 qrs. 15 lbs. The inscriptions on the bells are as follow:—

1st and 2nd.—William Dobson, Downham, Norfolk, Fecit 1823.

3rd.—Fear God and Honour the King.

4th.—Long Live George the Fourth.

5th and 6th.—Abraham Jobson, S.T.P. Vicarius me Dono dedit A.D., MDCCCXXIII.

7th.—Prosperity to the Town of Wisbech St. Peter, 1823.

8th.—Laudo Deum Verum; Plebem Voco; Congrego Clerum; Defunctus Ploro; Festem Fugo; Festa Decoro; 1823.

9th.—In wedlock's bands all ye who join,

With hands your hearts unite;

So shall our tuneful tongues combine,

To laud the nuptial rite.

10th.—Abraham Jobson, Vicar; Wm. Swansborough and T. Moore, Churchwardens; William Dobson, Founder, 1823,

I to the church the living call,

And to the grave do summon all.

In St. Augustine's Church, among the memorial windows which have been erected are those to the memory of the Rev. A. J. Perry, the first Vicar of that parish, Dr. David Charles Nicholl (unveiled in November, 1883), and Mrs. Fawcus (*nee* Miss Sharples). Several additions have been made to this Church in the shape of mosaic work employed in the decoration of the east end, and a carved oak chancel screen. The reredos was erected in 1878, of stone, the panels being filled with glass mosaic, displaying a central cross, with angels' figures on each side, bearing on shields the instruments of the Passion. A new vestry has been added, and a heating apparatus. The Church has 500 sittings. The living is a Vicarage, with an average tithe rent charge of £156, and net yearly value of £292, with residence. It has been held from 1883 to July, 1896, by the Rev. A. Izard, M.A., of Trinity College, Oxford, who was succeeded on removing to Slindon by the Rev. C. H. Crossley, M.A., the present Vicar.

The Octagon Church, or Chapel of Ease, was erected in 1826, in order to relieve the large congregations then attending the Parish Church. Dr. Jobson, who was Vicar, offered to endow it by the conveyance of an estate exceeding in value £5,000. The cost of erection was defrayed by shares of £50 each, to be repaid by the letting of sittings, and the work was entrusted to Mr. Swansborough, a local man, as architect. It cost about £10,000, and was originally surmounted by an octagonal lantern, supposed to have been an imitation of Alan de Walsingham's design for Ely Cathedral, but in 1846, when it showed signs of decay, the lantern was removed. An ancient metal chasing of the Ascension, in Gothic frame, a copy of the work of one of the early painters, was presented in 1847 by Mr. G. M. Lefever, and forms an altar piece to the chapel. There are vaults under the Chapel of Ease which are only occasionally used for interments. The first incumbent of the Octagon Church, or Chapel of Ease, was the Rev. Thomas Pattison Holmes, who laid the foundation stone of the building as the nephew and representative of Dr. Jobson, the venerable Vicar, who was prevented by the infirmities of age from undertaking a duty which his generous endowment and assistance would have otherwise entitled him to perform. Mr. Holmes at first held the curacy of Guyhirn also, but when that was constituted a separate ecclesiastical parish, he devoted his attention entirely to the Chapel of Ease, of which he was the minister for a great number of years. The appointment is vested in the Trustees, to whom Mr. Wm. White is the clerk. The living is now held by the Rev. R. Boyer, son of a former incumbent, the Rev. Robert Buckley Boyer, who succeeded the late Rev. Charles Sumpter Harris, but died after having held the living for a very few months. The Chapel of Ease has 800 sittings, of which 200 are free. The living is a perpetual curacy of the gross yearly value of £450, net £200, arising from 263 acres of glebe. The Chapel of Ease contains an organ built by Nicholson, in 1836, at a cost of £170. Miss Winter has been the organist for several years.

The following Vicars of Wisbech are placed on record:—Catholic—William De Norwold, 1252; Dr. Rogers, 1338; John Bolin, 1349; William de Newton, 1384; John Judde or Rudde, 1401; John Ockham, LL.D., 1422; William Abyinton, ; John Clampain, 1448; John Warkworth, D.D., 1472; William Gubbs, 1473; William Doughty, LL.D., 1494; John Wyatt, 1503; Robert Cliffe, LL.D., 1525; William Lord, 1537; William Hand, 1544; Henry Qgle, 1549; Hugh Margesson, B.A., 1544.

Protestant.—Matthew Champion, 1587; Joshua Blaxton, B.D., 1613; Thomas Emerson, 1615; Edward Furnis, 1630; William Coldwell, 1651; John Bellamy, M.A., 1702; Thomas Cole, M.A. (afterwards Dean of Norwich) 1714; Henry Bull, D.D., 1721; Henry Burrough, LL.D., 1749; John Warren, D.D. (afterward of St. David's and late of Bangor) 1773; James Burslem, LL.D., 1779; Hon. and Rev. C. Lindsay, M.A. (afterwards Bishop of Kildare, Ireland); Cæsar Morgan, D.D., 1795; Abraham Jobson, D.D., 1802; Henry Fardell, M.A., 1831-54; William Bonner Hopkins, B.D., 1854-66 (afterwards Vicar of Littleport); John Saul Howson, D.D., 1866-67 (afterwards Dean of Chester); John Scott, M.A., 1867-86; Robert Edward Reginald Watts, M.A., inducted October 19th, 1886. St. Augustine's—Rev. A. J. Perry, Rev. E. H. Littlewood, Rev. A. Izard, and Rev. C. H. Crossley. Chapel of Ease—Rev. Thomas Pattison Holmes, Rev. C. Sumner, Rev. Charles Sumpter Harris, Rev. Robert Buckley Boyer and Rev. A. J. Boyer.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## RELIGIOUS PROGRESS IN THE LAST HALF CENTURY.

## THE NONCONFORMISTS.



EARLY 250 years since, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* recorded the burning at the stake in 1555 of William Wolsey and Robert Pygott, both residents of Wisbech, because they refused to affirm "that the natural body and blood of Christ was not really present in the Sacrament." A description of the circumstances of this martyrdom will be found in the history of Wisbech Castle on page 19 of this work and need not be repeated here. Some 60 years later, Wisbech was associated with the Pilgrim Fathers, who for freedom of conscience left this country for Holland, and after a short residence at Leyden, landed in 1620 on American soil. Two of their number married wives from Wisbech, before embarking for the New World, and Dr. Brown, in his interesting work on the Pilgrim Fathers\* records the fact that Governor Bradford, one of the emigrants to New England (a voyager in the *Mayflower*, and subsequently made Governor of the new settlement) married Dorothea May, of Wisbech, on November 9th, 1613, at Amsterdam, and that her sister, Jacomyne May, also of Wisbech, was married four years before to another of the *Mayflower* emigrants, a printer from Rouen, named Jean de l'Echese. How these Separatists, as they were then contemptuously called, driven from their Yorkshire and Cambridgeshire homes, through their courage,

\* Chapter 1, page 19.



faith and industry, mainly secured the British occupancy of that country, is known in history, and it seems to indicate that Wisbech, even so far back as the seventeenth century, was noted for its sturdy Nonconformist adherents. There is further evidence of this, for in the latter part of the same century, persecution was rife in the locality. In 1695, a Nonconformist who ventured to preach at Guyhirn and other places in the Isle of Ely, was summoned to appear at the Sessions House, Wisbech, to account for the Calvinistic doctrines to which he had given utterance. David Culy, the offender against the religious bigotry of that day, was the son of a refugee who fled from France at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. After a long hearing, he was acquitted of the charge on which he was arraigned, and subsequently, as a convenient way of getting rid of a troublesome individual—in the eyes of the authorities—he was taken by the press-gang and put on board the tender at Lynn. Tradition says that he sang hymns with such vigour and fervour that once more to be rid of his religious zeal, they were obliged to send him ashore, and he was allowed to make his way back to the Isle of Ely. To protect him from this persecution in the future, his friends determined to make him a freeholder, and purchased a piece of land which was for many years known as "Culy's Lots." It may be added that he was the founder of the Calvinistic denomination which afterwards met at the Wool Hall, in Exchange Square, and in 1837 built Zion Chapel, on the Victoria Road.

Nor was this persecution confined to one body, for in a history of the Cambridge Meeting of the Society of Friends, published in 1888, written by Miss Susanna Peckover and Mr. John Brown, we read of the persecutions which the Friends suffered, not only at Cambridge, but at Wisbech and Ely. At the time of the Restoration, 67 of their number were in Cambridge prison, eight in Wisbech gaol, and 51 in Ely gaol. Two ladies, who were Friends, for discoursing on matters of religion with students of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, were publicly whipped, and amongst the causes for inflicting fines and imprisonment were those of not joining in the Church responses; opening a shop on a Saint's day; non-payment of tithes or Easter demands; refusing to bear arms; refusing to take an oath of allegiance although willing to affirm, &c. Even during the last 50 years, the maintenance of their principles has exposed the Wisbech Friends to some odium, and it is only 42 years since the members of that body, refusing to satisfy, from conscientious scruples, the

demands made upon them for church rates, permitted their horse provender, to the value required, to be seized and sold to meet the claim. There is little doubt that Dissenters generally throughout the district suffered in like manner, but few records seem to have been preserved. Three well-known Nonconformists of Wisbech, Mr. Robert Wherry, Mr. G. Reed, and Mr. F. J. Lilley, had articles of household furniture seized and sold by auction at the Exchange Hall, on March 18th, 1853, as will be seen by the following copy of a handbill which is in our possession:—"To be sold by auction, on Friday, 18th of March, 1853, at 3 p.m., at the Exchange Hall, Corn Hill, Wisbech, the following property (under distress warrants):—Lot 1, twenty-two yards and a half of Kidderminster carpet; Lot 2, eight mahogany horse-hair seated chairs; Lot 3, a mahogany telescope dining table with shifting leaf. Further particulars may be known on application to W. T. Rust, Superintendent of Police." The carpet referred to above, belonged to Ald. Wherry, the chairs to Mr. F. J. Lilley, and the dining table to Mr. G. Reed. Household furniture belonging to Mr. Geo. Dawbarn was at the same time seized, but being bought in—or redeemed—by friends was restored to him. The abolition of compulsory Church Rates by the Legislature subsequently removed this difficulty, which aroused continual opposition in Walsoken and neighbouring villages, as well as at Wisbech.

At the beginning of the present century, but little distinction was made by business establishments between week-days and Sundays, and it was by no means infrequent that shops were opened for business during the early part of Sunday morning. It was said that Messrs. Jecks and Dawbarn were the first to close their business establishments during the whole of that day. Nonconformists suffered serious disabilities and were debarred from municipal or judicial office, unless they previously received the sacrament at the parish church. The late Mr. Robert Dawbarn, who was elected Town Bailiff in 1831, was the first Nonconformist to fill that office after the removal of that barrier.

#### THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

The Nonconformist bodies of the town have been increasingly active in religious work and in the improvement of their sanctuaries during the last 50 years. There is scarcely a place of worship that has not undergone renewal, restoration or enlargement. It has been already told how that the early adherents of the Society of Friends suffered for the sake of the principles now enjoyed by their posterity, leaving behind them an example of

Christian faith and patience. This body, although not very numerous, have maintained their principles and are still conspicuous for their Christian zeal and promotion of religious work.

The earliest accounts of Friends in Cambridgeshire date from the same month wherein Oliver Cromwell assumed the title of Protector, December, 1653, when Elizabeth Williams, aged 50, and Mary Fisher, aged 30, came from the North of England, and for discoursing concerning matters of religion with the College Students "were mocked and derided by the scholars and cruelly used, and publicly whipped by order of the Mayor, none having the courage to oppose the current of popular prejudice and the misapplied power of the magistrate." Two other Friends, James Lancaster and James Halkead came to Cambridge, a year after, on the same mission, but were summarily ejected, although not until they had so faced their accusers and persecutors that some of the revellers were convinced and their consciences aroused. In 1660, twenty-nine sufferers at Cambridge presented a petition to King Charles II, stating that as they were gathered in their own hired house, a mob of University men, townsmen and boys assembled, and their drunken shouting and violent conduct resulted in—

The sore beating of men and women Friends so that 22 had their blood shed, whilst others were greatly injured almost to death; and when they had driven us from the house and cleared the streets of us they returned and quite battered down the wall; and bays on each side of the meeting house and laid it open to the streets. They then assaulted an Alderman's house where some of us lodged, and beat the man of the house at his own door, and departed not so long as it was light.

But in spite of the persecutions suffered by the Friends, they became more numerous as a body, and eight years later, in 1668, a Quarterly Meeting was established, which comprised 45 meetings in Cambridgeshire, the Isle of Ely, and Huntingdonshire. These continued for four years, when the Quarterly Meeting was divided into two, one for the Isle of Ely and Cambridgeshire, styled the Haddenham Q.M. and the other for Huntingdonshire. One entry in the minute book has the significant words 1670-1, "Cambridge, Most Friends in prison," and again in 1698, "£16 was sent, of which Cambridge 30s., for the releefe of poore Friends in Scotland and redemption of captives." This minute book finishes in 1756, but the Quarterly Meetings of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire were afterwards held at St. Ives.

In a collection of "Testimonies concerning several Ministers

of the Gospel amongst the people called Quakers," published in London in 1760, is one regarding Katherine Peckover, who is stated to have been born about 1666, and to have died in 1741, at her own dwelling house in Fakenham, having been a minister about 46 years. She was probably a daughter-in-law of the Edmund Peckover who took the Parliamentary side in the Civil war and became an active trooper in Cromwell's army. After receiving his discharge he settled at Fakenham, and was the first of that name to join the Society of Friends. Jonathan Peckover, its founder at Wisbech, was born at Fakenham in 1754, and settled as a banker at Wisbech in 1777. The Friends at first worshipped in a quaint thatched meeting house with casements dating from the days of George Fox, their founder, whose followers were first called "Quakers" somewhat contemptuously by Justice Benet, of Derby, in 1650, because Fox "bade them tremble at the word of the Lord." The appearance of the old meeting house, as well as an adjacent house, has been preserved in a water-colour drawing by the late Mr. Algernon Peckover. This has now been replaced by a more convenient building, which was opened on October 24th, 1854, and has recently been renovated. The graveyard attached to this modest place of worship, contains the resting places of several members of the Peckover family, and also the grave of Jane Stuart, the natural daughter of King James II, who was buried there. Box edging has been planted on the grave, with her initials "J.S.," and the age and date "88" "1742," and this is perpetuated out of respect to her memory. The grandfather and grandmother of Mr. Alexander Peckover, Bank House (Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Peckover) knew many people who were acquainted with Jane Stuart and her romantic history. *Fenland Notes and Queries* contains the following particulars from Mr. Samuel Egar, of Wryde, who obtained them from Mr. Peckover:—

Extract, dated October, 1809.—A natural daughter of King James II was convicted of Friends' principles, and imprisoned for same with Thomas Elwood and others. Upon her being engaged to a young man for marriage and the day fixed, as they were on the road the coach was overturned and her intended husband was killed, and his brother's leg broken. She stayed in London and nursed the young man, when after his recovery she assumed a disguise and travelled on foot to the Isle of Ely. Inquiring at some friends' houses for employment she was asked what she could do. She answered that she was willing to put her hand to anything. He then said "Canst thou reap?" She replied she could hardly tell, but if he pleased she would try. So he sent her into the field, and before evening she discovered herself to be

so great a proficient at reaping as to be called "Queen of the reapers." She constantly attended the adjacent meeting, and observing a rock (?) hard by, she either put up with a natural cave or had a cell (cellar ?) made therein, where she lived quite a recluse, spinning for her employment. She told Sarah Taylor that she enjoyed such contentment and peace that she would not leave her cell and spinning to be Queen of England. She had been at many European Courts, particularly the Hanoverian and Prussian, and the Pretender being her supposed brother, she once travelled by chaise into Scotland to see him.

Extract, dated 10th February, 1810.—Jane Stuart, supposed to be a natural daughter of James II, after renouncing the world and splendour of courts, resided at Wisbech in Cambridgeshire. It is to be regretted that few memorials remain of her, but two ancient and respectable inhabitants, now deceased, have stated to the writer of this the following incidents. When she first came she sought employment by standing (as is usual with labourers at this day who want work) on or near the foot of the bridge, where in haytime and harvest the farmers resort every morning to hire. She selected for her abode a cellar in a part of the town called the Old Market, where she spun worsted, to dispose of which she regularly had a stall on the market day. Being once thus employed, she recognised by the arms and livery a coach and attendants going to the principal inn (the Rose and Crown) near to which her stall stood, upon which she immediately packed up her worsted, retired to her cellar, and carefully concealed herself. The owner, who was said to be the Duke of Argyll, endeavoured to find her, but without success. The house under which she lived has been since rebuilt, and part of it is occupied by the Lady Mary Knollis, aunt to the present Earl of Hanbury (near Oil Mill Lane). She constantly attended when in health the meeting of the Society of Friends in Wisbech, was humble and exemplary in her conduct, well esteemed by her neighbours, invariably avoided all conversation relative to her family connections, and when in the freedom of intercourse any expression inadvertently escaped leading to an inquiry, she stopped short, seemed to regret having disclosed so much, and silenced further research. She read the New Testament in Greek, but even this circumstance was discovered accidentally by an unexpected call; was fond of birds, which were frequently allowed to leave their cages and fly about in her apartment. She died according to the Friends' register the 12th of 7th mo. 1742. aged 88, and was buried in the Society's graveyard at Wisbech, where out of respect to her memory box has been planted round her grave with her initials, age, and date, which still remains to mark the spot of her interment. In the rebellion of 1715, she said she had often played with the Pretender on her knees when he was a little white-headed boy. Her two half sisters Queens Mary and Anne being then dead, and the Hanoverian family on the throne, she would not feel any fear of being interfered with. Her mother is unknown, but she stated she was a Protestant. She is said to have given suitable religious advice to young people when opportunity offered. On one occasion while in the graveyard she was taken with a fainting fit, and had a tree planted near the spot, expressing a

wish to be buried there. This was carried out, and the tree growing too large for the situation, was eventually cut down and sold for 12s. The grave is still (1892) kept up as originally laid out with box.

#### THE CONGREGATIONALISTS.

In the year 1816 a few individuals of the town and neighbourhood, holding Congregational principles, sought a temporary building for divine worship. Through the kindness of Mr. Thomas Cox they were accommodated, free of expense, with a part of his premises in the Corn Exchange opening, known by the name of the "Wool' Hall," which was accordingly fitted up for the purpose of public worship. Circumstances for a time were so discouraging that the attempt to found a Church of the Congregational order, would in all probability have been abandoned, but for the kindly and important counsel of the Rev. James Arrow, of King's Lynn, who strongly advised that some further effort should be made. In accordance with his suggestion, application was made in the early part of 1817 to the Committee of the Hoxton Academy, and the services of the Rev. William Holmes, one of the students of that Institution, were promised for the whole of the ensuing midsummer. Great and marked success attended his labours and within a few months a Church was formed, of which Mr. Holmes became the first Minister. Soon after, in 1818, the Congregationalists or Independents erected their place of worship in Castle Square. The first stone of the building was laid on May 4th of that year by the Rev. William Holmes, their Pastor. When the building was opened, on December 9th, 1818, the celebrated Robert Hall preached in the morning, and in the evening, being a Baptist, he occupied the pulpit of Ely Place Chapel. The Pastor associated with the cause at this time, the Rev. William Holmes, filled that position for the long period of 38 years, and was also for upwards of 30 years Secretary of the Isle of Ely and Wisbech Auxiliary Bible Society at Wisbech. He was also Secretary to the Religious Tract Society and the British and Infant Schools, and mainly instrumental in the organization of the Wisbech General Cemetery. His death took place very suddenly on June 14th, 1854, under circumstances of a remarkable character. He had fallen into the river in a state of paralysis whilst taking a walk, and was found dead, although his body was not under water. Mr. Holmes, who was 59 years of age at the time of his decease, was held in high esteem by all denominations, and his services to the Bible Society were warmly acknowledged in its annual reports. The Rev. Henry Trigge became assistant Minister during the latter part of Mr. Holmes' life, owing to his paralysis,

and continued as Pastor for a short time after Mr. Holmes' death, being succeeded by the Rev. James Smith, who fulfilled the duties of the pastorate during a period of nearly 25 years. He came from London to Wisbech about 1858, with a considerable reputation, having been the Minister of a chapel in Carey Street, since pulled down to make room for the present Law Courts, fronting the Strand. A highly intelligent and cultured person who had for years attended his ministry remarked of Mr. Smith, "I never heard him preach a poor sermon all that time." He had a power of putting striking truths in piquant and pithy sentences or paragraphs, which the thoughtful listener rarely forgot. He was also a successful platform speaker, possessing great readiness and fluency, with ability to reply on the spur of the moment to opponents of all kinds. He was a member of the Wisbech School Board, Board of Guardians, Secretary to the committee appointed to superintend the erection of the Clarkson Memorial, in the completion of which he took a great interest, and was always willing to help with his voice and sympathy, local and philanthropic movements such as the Bible Society meetings, the Institute Anniversary assemblies, and similar public gatherings. His health failing, he went to Ramsgate and died there on June 3rd, 1882, at the age of 62. His interment took place in the General Cemetery, Leverington Road, Wisbech. During Mr. Smith's pastorate, the Chapel was enlarged and improved, and the debt paid. Two Chapels were also built in the neighbourhood, one in the village of Gorefield, and the other on the South Brink, three or four miles from Wisbech. The foundation stone of the last named building was laid in October, 1861, by Lord Teynham, who afterwards preached in Castle Square Chapel. The Chapel was opened for worship in January of the following year, and services continue to be regularly held at both these mission stations. The Rev. H. Matthews held the pastorate for a short time, and on his leaving for Western Australia, was succeeded in December, 1889, by the Rev. James Thomas, an able and popular Minister, whose ministrations are not only appreciated by his own and other congregations, but who renders valued public services in connection with Poor Law business and other local matters. The Chapel has at various times undergone improvements and has 450 sittings.

#### THE WESLEYANS.

Amongst the more distinctive indications of religious activity in Wisbech during the eighteenth century may be mentioned the

influences of John Wesley's preaching, which reached this town towards the end of the eighteenth century. It does not appear that Wesley himself ever came to Wisbech, although Lynn and Yarmouth are both mentioned in his journal, his first visit to Lynn being in 1771. Three years before his death, in 1789, Mr. Ashmead and Mr. Charles Kyte, of Lynn, were assailed with showers of stones and pelted with mud as they delivered their message of peace and goodwill to the people on Wisbech Market Place. But persecution did not daunt the followers of Wesley even in those days, and as an effect of the preaching of these men, a barn, situated between the end of Victoria Road and Timber Market was opened for public services. In 1793, a barn was purchased in Deadman's Lane, as it was then called, now Great Church Street, the site of the present Conservative Club, and was utilised as a place of worship. When the Castle estate was sold in 1794 a site was obtained from Mr. Medworth, the purchaser of that property, and the present Chapel in the Crescent was erected upon it, the old building in Deadman's Lane becoming a Charity School under Mr. James Smith's management, and afterwards a private school in 1811, at which many boys who subsequently occupied prominent positions in life were educated. A view of this primitive Nonconformist chapel of a century ago will be found among the illustrations in this work, and also an interior view of the present chapel. The Crescent Chapel was opened about 1803, and in 1835 the congregation having grown considerably, a portion of the Chapel was pulled down and an enlargement made at a cost of £1200. Improvements have from time to time been made since, and the schoolroom behind the Chapel, which had been utilised as a British school, was purchased. Among other additions a stained glass window has been inserted to the memory of Mr. Thomas Peatling, of Leverington House, one of its most generous supporters. A new organ of admirable tone and power costing nearly £600 has been placed in the Church, which has undergone re-arrangement and renovation in connection with the celebration of the centenary of Wesleyan Methodism in Wisbech. This event was commemorated in July, 1893, by special services conducted by the Rev. Dr. Moulton, Rev. Dr. Young, Rev. Featherstone Kellett, and others, and a public luncheon in the Public Hall, at which the Mayor (Ald. Carrick) presided, and the Hon. Arthur Brand, M.P., and Mrs. Brand, Mr. S. G. Stopford-Sackville, Captain Hart (Stamford), Rev. F. Kellett, Mr. T. T. Gray (Bedford), Mr. and Mrs. F. Peatling, Ald. Groom, Ald. Goward, and others were present,



the proceeds of the various gatherings amounting to £370. Under the connexional system the Ministers change every three years, those at present officiating being the Revs. W. Ellis and F. J. Mann. Adjoining the Chapel is a minister's residence, and the Chapel has about 500 sittings, with a convenient schoolroom, class rooms and vestries at the rear of the building.

#### THE UNITED METHODIST FREE CHURCH.

This Denomination was formed in the year 1857, by the union of the Wesleyan Methodist Association and the Wesleyan Reformers, both of which Denominations were formed by persons who had been expelled and by persons who voluntarily withdrew from the Wesleyan Methodists, because of their objections to the doctrine of Pastoral Supremacy as held by the Wesleyan Methodists, and because they believed that each Church should have the right to admit its members, exercise discipline, and to exclude the unworthy from its communion, and to elect its own officers; also that each Circuit should possess the power of freely inviting its own ministers. The Methodist Free Churches are therefore self-governed.

The Methodist Free Church in this town originated in the year 1850. For some years they held their services in the Public Hall, but on July 28th, 1862, during the ministry of the Revs. T. Hardy and W. Francis, the memorial stone of the present building in Church Street was laid by Mr. Thomas Larner, of Framlingham, and the chapel was completed in the following February. The Rev. R. Chew, recently deceased, who preached at the opening services, was a prominent and able minister of this Denomination. Since that time considerable improvements have been made in the Chapel and adjoining schools, and an organ of excellent tone has been erected in the Chapel. The Rev. J. W. Armstrong is the present Minister, and was last year 1895-6 elected Vice-President of the Council of the Free Churches of Wisbech. The Wisbech Church is the head of the Circuit, and has twelve country Churches of the surrounding district in association with it.

#### THE PRIMITIVE METHODISTS.

The Primitive Methodist body in Wisbech dates from about 1824. Its services were at first held in rooms or in the open air, until about 1838, when the Society purchased Providence Chapel in New Walsoken. In 1868 this body erected a commodious chapel in Church Terrace, with school room attached, the new

FIRST METHODIST CHAPEL, IN DEADMAN'S LANE

(Allendale Bowe's Charity School)  
1793



ELY PLACE BAPTIST CHURCH, CRESCENT

Structure 1878.



INTERIOR OF WESLEYAN CHAPEL, CRESCENT.

Showing Contingent alterations.

# NONCONFORMIST PLACES OF WORSHIP.

FIRST METHODIST CHAPEL, IN DEADMAN'S LANE. ELY PLACE BAPTIST CHURCH, CRESCENT.  
INTERIOR OF WESLEYAN CHAPEL, CRESCENT.

Mr. W. Tallack's interesting book, *George Fox, the Friends, and the Early Baptists*, he shows that Fox, finding himself in substantial agreement with the latter, extensively accepted their principles. Both of the divisions of the Baptists had anticipated most of the doctrines and also the system of discipline adopted by George Fox and the Friends, but it was the General Baptists, who were a distinct body as early as 1608, that most fully arrived at the views and usages which have been subsequently attributed to Quaker origin. The General Baptists had, for example, already entertained scruples in respect to the use of the Pagan names of the months and the days, the unlawfulness of oaths, &c. So it was in no degree surprising that the Baptists should, as Mr. Tallack says, join the ranks of the Friends "in shoals." But it would seem that the latter have adhered far more firmly to their early principles than the former. When the Baptists first erected their Meeting House, persecution was rife, and it is affirmed that one, Mrs. Grant, was burned alive for sheltering these "heretics" as they were denominated. The Rev. J. Jarrom was for 36 years Pastor of the General Baptist Church, worshipping in Ely Place, the Chapel having been erected in the second year of his pastorate. In 1813, Mr. Jarrom was appointed Theological and Classical Tutor of an Academy which was transferred from London to Wisbech. The Church was very active during this period, and among its more prominent supporters during this and subsequent pastorates was Mr. Robert Wherry, who was four times Mayor of the Borough, and in earlier days helped to fight the battle of the Church Rates.

The new Baptist Chapel in Ely Place was erected during the pastorate of the Rev. W. E. Winks, Ald. Wherry, Mr. F. C. Southwell, Mr. Gromitt, and other prominent supporters who are deceased, assisting in the undertaking. It was built on the site of the old Chapel, and other property purchased for the purpose, the whole cost, including a lofty spire and large school-room, being nearly £5,000. Mr. H. Pooley was the architect, and Mr. Chapman was the contractor. The top-stone of the spire was laid on September 2nd, 1872, and the building was opened on March 20th, 1873 (the decease of Ald. Wherry having taken place about a month previously), by the Rev. Charles Vince, of Birmingham, who preached morning and afternoon, Mr. Henry Goodman, of St. Ives, presiding at the evening meeting. The building is commodious and conveniently arranged, and a centre of useful work. Many will recall, among memorable gatherings held within its walls, the great Missionary Meeting

which took place some years since in connection with the General Baptist Conference, under the presidency of Sir George Campbell, when Father Grassi and the Rev. J. Wall, from Rome, addressed a crowded audience.

The Rev. W. E. Winks, now Pastor of a Cardiff Baptist Church, and author of several religious and popular works, was for several years Pastor of this Church, and his services were handsomely acknowledged when he resigned. The Rev. A. G. Everitt, who came from Dorking, is the present Minister, and has acceptably discharged the duties of the pastorate for several years past, having succeeded the Rev. J. Bentley. An illustration of the exterior of this building will be found in this volume.

#### THE HILL STREET BAPTIST CHURCH.

With respect to the Particular Baptist body we have already seen that land in Deadman's Lane was purchased for a Chapel in 1692; and the *Congregational Magazine* for 1820 says that the name of Wm. Rix occurs in connection with the cause at that time, as well as earlier, as a pastor or leader. He was known to be resident here as late as 1715. No records of his successor exist until 1781, when Mr. Samuel Fisher commenced his ministry which lasted until his death in 1803. From traditions which have been preserved, it appears that he was a man of remarkable gifts, scholarly, and singularly eloquent, moving, it is said, his congregation, at times, even to tears. Several of his sermons were printed, and one on "The Duty of Subjects to the Civil Magistrates," preached in Ship Lane (Upper Hill Street) Chapel, February 28th, 1794, on a day appointed as a General Fast attracted widespread attention. It was during the height of the French Revolution when sedition and anarchy seemed brewing in England, as well as in the various countries of Europe. Mr. Fisher received special thanks for this discourse from William Pitt, the Prime Minister. A new Chapel was built by the Particular Baptists about 1792 in Upper Hill Street, on their departure from the meeting house in Deadman's Lane. This was pulled down in 1858 and with the addition of two cottages to the site, a new chapel in early English style was erected from the designs of Mr. R. B. Dawbarn, at a cost of some £4,000. It is the only edifice in the town, besides the old Parish Church, wholly constructed of stone, some of the large blocks from the old Bridge and the Butter Cross being used, as well as new stone from the Ketton quarries for doorways, windows, &c. The building was opened for public service on May 8th, 1859. Since

that time galleries have been added in order to meet the extra accommodation required for its congregations and a larger entrance, with vestry, has been erected in place of an adjoining cottage, the building having now about 600 sittings. The Sunday School is held in the Public Hall, opposite the Chapel, the lecture and committee rooms being used as infant and adult class rooms. In connection with this body there are several Mission stations. The Zion Chapel, in New Wisbech, erected in 1856, belonging to the Calvinists, was for five years leased from that body and adapted to the Victoria Road Mission services, under the management of Mr. Alfred Southwell, and during that time has been enlarged by the addition of a vestry, with some internal improvements. The Calvinists having resumed their services, the Victoria Road Mission has temporarily removed to Selwyn Hall. The North Brink Mission Chapel is also utilised as a branch of religious work, and frequent meetings and services are held in the Park Hall. This building was for many years used as a private school, in which the late Mr. Eastland Staveley, whose diversified knowledge and educational capabilities were of a high character, directed the education of many who afterwards became useful and prominent citizens. The hall was subsequently purchased from his family, and has since undergone alterations to adapt it for mission work and social meetings. A further enlargement is contemplated at an early date, £100 having been spontaneously subscribed for that purpose, at the last annual meeting of the church and congregation, as a Thanksgiving Fund for the long (60 years) and beneficent reign of Queen Victoria, and the religious freedom enjoyed as a result.

The Hill Street Church has been greatly indebted for its present prosperity to the labours of Mr. Reynoldson, for considerably over 40 years its Pastor, who died on October 30th, 1871, within a month of attaining to 78 years of age. Among those who assisted in training him for the ministry was Mr. Jarrom, already referred to as the head of a Theological Academy in the town. Mr. Reynoldson was a man of fervent piety and of a very comprehensive grasp of Scripture, of which for considerably more than half a century he was a diligent student and successful teacher. When past middle life, he gladly availed himself of the opportunity offered him to increase his knowledge of Hebrew, studying for a time in London, under the tutorship of Dr. Davidson, the editor of *Bagster's Analytical Hebrew Lexicon*. Possessing great expository gifts, he was an exceedingly instructive and attractive preacher and during his ministry, the rebuilding

of the chapel, as well as sundry enlargements became necessary. Outside his pastoral work, Mr. Reynoldson gave much time and effort in the service of the Bible Society, of which he was one of the local secretaries. He also rendered important help in connection with the British Schools in the Town and to the old Trustee Savings' Bank, the secretary of which he assisted with much regularity. For some years before his death his health failed greatly and he was able to preach but seldom, and had to leave outside work to others. He was one of those gifted and thorough ministers, whose removal make gaps, seldom or never refilled. After Mr. Reynoldson's decease, Mr. John Cockett and Mr. Tyars were jointly associated in the pastorate, and on the retirement of Mr. Tyars (whose services were acknowledged by the presentation of a gold watch, suitably inscribed) the Rev. J. W. Campbell, from Arbroath, son of a highly esteemed Baptist minister at Cambridge, now deceased, was invited to become associated with the pastorate. Under the joint direction of Mr. Cockett and Mr. Campbell the Church has spiritually prospered, and their ministrations, with the organizations resulting from their labours, have proved a source of strength and vitality to the Church. The Park Hall Sunday afternoon lectures, originated by the late Mr. R. B. Dawbarn, and carried on latterly by the Hill Street Church, with the assistance of speakers from other denominations, aim at instructing young and old in the truths of the Book of Books.

There are other denominations which are not less active and zealous in religious work. The Salvation Army has erected during the last few years new barracks in East Street, Horsefair, and attracts a good number of followers. The Unitarian Chapel has been adapted for the purposes of a Railway Mission Hall, managed by Mrs. Pollard, assisted by several railway employes. The Plymouth Brethren worship in a room in Lower Hill Street, in which the Working Men's Institute originated, and conduct open air services occasionally.

The Council of the Free Churches of Wisbech has been recently formed to promote unity of action among the Nonconformist Churches in relation to questions affecting their interests. Meetings are held quarterly under the presidency of Mr. W. S. Collins, and the Revs. J. Thomas, J. W. Armstrong, and A. E. Edwards, have successively filled the offices of Vice-Presidents. The Revs. J. Thomas and A. G. Everett are the Secretaries, and Mr. Tyars is Treasurer of the Council. The Society is federated with the Cambridgeshire Council, and the influence of

this movement appears to be making considerable progress in the county.

#### THE ROMAN CATHOLICS

The Catholics first held their services in a carpenter's workshop in New Wisbech, in the neighbourhood of Victoria Road. Afterwards, mainly through the exertions of Mr. Antonio Mantegani, of Lugano, then a resident of Wisbech, a new Church was erected and opened on September 1st, 1854, on a site near to the Great Eastern Railway passenger station. It was built at the expense of the Hon. Charles Cholmondeley, afterwards Canon of the Cathedral Church, Shrewsbury, from designs by Mr. W. Wardell, of Hampstead, and was dedicated to Our Lady and St. Charles Borromeo. The Bishop of Northampton, Dr. Wareing, also Dr. Manning, who afterwards became Cardinal Manning, and Canon Abbot took part in the celebration of High Mass at the opening services, and Dr. Manning preached the sermon. In June, 1856, a new aisle was added to the Church, and several improvements have been made since. Ten years later it was restored, and was re-opened on November 25th, 1866, when Canon Cholmondeley, the principal founder,\* was present at the services. The building is in the Decorated style, with chancel, nave, aisles, and bell turret. There is a Chapel at Thorney Toll, a temporary building, called the Oratory of St. Patrick, which was opened in 1862, served occasionally by the resident Priest at Wisbech, the Rev. H. C. Colpman, who has for 35 years officiated in that capacity.

#### THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS

One proof of the advancement of religious work is to be found in the development of the Sunday School movement. In 1809, the first Sunday School was opened in Wisbech, under the management of the Wesleyan Methodists, in Mr. Ollard's brewery, between Little Church Street and the Canal. It was afterwards removed to the Wool Hall, in Exchange Square, at one time occupied by the Calvinists before they built Zion Chapel, Victoria Road. The Sunday School was again removed to the room under the Crescent Chapel until 1849, when the building in Deadman's Lane, which was converted from a barn into a Wesleyan Chapel in 1793, was re-purchased and adapted for the purpose. In February, 1853, Mr. William Dawbarn commenced a Sunday School in the building now used by the Plymouth Brethren for

\* Canon Cholmondeley died on January 22nd, 1897.

their meetings in Hill-street, and since that time, almost every denomination has associated with its religious work the teaching of the young. On August 3rd, 1853, the Jubilee of the Sunday School Union was celebrated in Wisbech, with a festival in which 2,000 children took part, assembling in the Market Place and singing the National Anthem. A large tea meeting in Mr. Potto Brown's tent, pitched in a field in Pickard's Lane, afterwards took place, and a meeting under Mr. Wherry's presidency. The proceeds, £37, were divided among the Nonconformist schools, to be appropriated to the purchase of libraries. A still more interesting celebration was the Centenary of the foundation of Sunday Schools in this country by Robert Raikes, which was celebrated by both Church of England and Nonconformist Schools. The Church Schools arranged a special service in the Parish Church, followed by a tea and conference in the Public Hall, and the Nonconformists held a breakfast and conference in Ely Place Schoolroom, with a concert by 600 children in the Corn Exchange in the evening, under the presidency of the late Mr. Jonathan Peckover, who until his death, conducted for many years a Young Men's Bible Class in the Friends' Meeting House, North Brink. This has been continued by Mr. Alexander Peckover, LL.D., until the present time, and its members have derived much benefit and found much pleasure in their weekly and annual gatherings. Miss Peckover also conducts a similar class for women and girls.

#### RELIGIOUS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.

The British and Foreign Bible Society has been represented in Wisbech for a period of 84 years. Until recently, four organizations were in existence in Wisbech having for their object the promotion of the excellent work of this Society, which is to circulate the Scriptures as widely as possible and in every language of the earth. The oldest of these organizations known by the title of "The Auxiliary Bible Society for the Northern Division of the Isle of Ely" was established in 1813 and celebrated its Jubilee in 1863, Mr. William Peckover, the only survivor of the 1813 committee, of which he was the Secretary, presiding at the evening meeting. A very interesting report of that branch of the Society was read at the meeting by the Rev. J. W. Berryman, in which reference was made to the circumstances under which the Auxiliary was originally established. A few young men in humble stations in life subscribed 1½d. per week for the support of a small Bible Association amongst themselves, and being encouraged



by its success they communicated their plans to others of riper years. As a result of these small beginnings a meeting was held in January, 1813, in the Corn Exchange, when a committee was chosen to form an Auxiliary. In May of that year, the Earl of Hardwicke, Lord Lieutenant of the County, presided at a meeting held at the Sessions House, Wisbech, convened for the purpose of establishing the Isle of Ely Auxiliary, and accepted the office of first President, which he filled until his death. The Bishop of Kildare, Lord F. G. Osborne, M.P., Viscount Milton, Thomas Clarkson, M.A., and others were chosen Vice-Presidents, Mr. Jonathan Peckover being Treasurer, and the Secretaries for the Northern Division were Mr. Wm. Peckover, Mr. Wetherhead, and Rev. T. Maddock, Long Sutton. In 1835, it was agreed to divide this Auxiliary into Northern and Southern Divisions and this, the Northern portion, confined itself to Wisbech, with branch Societies at Long Sutton, Tydd, Chatteris, March, and Whittlesey. At the Jubilee celebration in 1863, the Rev. Robert Reynoldson, who had at that time been associated with the Society for 47 years, suggested that the Wisbech Branch Bible Society should be formed and at a meeting held a few days after, it was organized, Mr. Reynoldson presiding at the meeting at which the officers were appointed. For many years Mr. Alexander Peckover has been the active President of this Society, Mr. Jos. Anderson was formally Secretary, and afterwards Mr. Henry Cockett. A Ladies' Association was originated, also a Twig Society, and these organizations are now amalgamated under one comprehensive title, viz., the Isle of Ely Auxiliary Bible Society (Wisbech District), Mr. Alexander Peckover, LL.D., Lord Lieutenant of the County, retaining the Presidency. The past and present members of the Peckover family have been for the 80 years that it has been in existence amongst its most generous and ardent supporters, invariably attending the annual meetings. The three Vice-Presidents, all ex-secretaries, have been valuable workers for this Society—the Rev. E. H. Lovelock, Mr. John Cockett, and Mr. E. R. Schofield—their services on their retirement being thus recognised by appointment to this office. Messrs. H. Cockett and J. T. Jeffrey are now the Secretaries of the Society and Mr. F. M. Bland, the Treasurer. An important work has been done by this organization and when the centenary history of the Society shall appear in 1904, it is to be hoped that the assistance given from this neighbourhood to the circulation of the Scriptures will not have diminished as the result of the union of the

organizations in Wisbech, but that this concentration of forces may prove to have been advantageous.

#### THE PEACE ASSOCIATION

The Wisbech Local Peace Association may be said to have originated in Wisbech with the visit of Elihu Burritt, who energetically advocated peace principles, and made, in August, 1852, preliminary arrangements for the formation of a Peace Society at a meeting held at Mr. William Dawbarn's house. For a long time such an organization was in existence, though it was not until some years later that the members of the Society of Friends, who have always been advocates of Peace and the settlement of international disputes by arbitration, undertook a more active campaign in support of its views. Miss P. H. Peckover is a most active President of the Society, and is assisted by Mr. Wade as hon. secretary, Miss S. Peckover being Colonial hon. secretary. There are four committees assisting in the work, and during 1894, 13,600 tracts, 156 declaration books, and 250 membership cards were sent out. The members of this Association are spread over a wide area—France, Turkey, Denmark, Belgium, Germany, and Holland being included among the foreign countries represented, and Australia and New Zealand in the Colonies.

#### TEMPERANCE WORK.

The Temperance Organizations include the Total Abstinence Society, which meets annually to elect its officers at the White Lion Hotel, re-built some years ago for the purposes of providing a well-arranged Temperance house for the accommodation of travellers and others. There is also the Church of England Temperance Society, a Good Templars' Lodge, and Bands of Hope in connection with one or two religious denominations. The North Cambs. Temperance Council has been recently established to advance these principles over a wider area of the County, and periodically holds conferences and meetings at various towns within the limits of its operations. The Rev. J. Lloyd James, of March, is the President, and the Rev. J. W. Campbell, the Secretary.

The Ladies' Temperance Committee has been instrumental in disseminating literature and visiting the houses in the town and adjoining suburb of Walsoken, in which area the number of abstainers is ascertained by the district visitors to be 3,532, a large proportion in comparison with the population. Miss P. H. Peckover is the President and has been most energetic in pro-

moting its work, one of the latest developments having been the introduction of simple scientific teaching as to the nature of alcohol in the Walsoken Board Schools. The British Women's Temperance Association, Wisbech Branch, which works in harmony with this Committee, many ladies assisting both, was last year established and has over 100 members. Miss Alexandrina Peckover has presided at several successful public meetings, at which Lady Battersea, Canon Barker, M.A., and other well known speakers have given addresses. Mrs. F. J. Gardiner is President of the Society, Mrs. George Dawbarn, the Secretary, and Mrs. Bland, of Inglethorpe Manor, the Treasurer.

That there has been material religious progress in the town and neighbourhood during the last 50 years, must be apparent, but there is still ample scope for further advancement in the improvement of the spiritual and moral condition of its people. The filling to overflowing of the numerous places of worship would be an encouraging and inspiring sight which has not yet been realized, and one of the great difficulties with which Christian workers have chiefly to contend is the apathy and indifference of those whom no denomination altogether reaches. Another 50 years may notice the wielding of a greater influence by these religious and philanthropic agencies to which we have referred, and the dawn of brighter and happier days that shall demonstrate that the present has been a time of the sowing of the seed, the results of which shall hereafter be reaped and garnered, bearing testimony to the zeal for the Master of its many labourers who are toiling in the harvest field with full confidence as to the results of their work and its ultimate reward.

## CHAPTER XVII.

PUBLIC MEMORIALS, PROVIDENT AND CHARITABLE  
SOCIETIES AND ASSEMBLY ROOMS.

THE Memorial to Thomas Clarkson, a native of Wisbech, who devoted his life to promoting the abolition of the Slave Trade, occupies a conspicuous position in the centre of the open space at the Bridge foot. The monument was erected by public subscription and unveiled on the 10th of November, 1881, by the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Right Hon. Bouverie Brand, G.C.B., who was subsequently created Viscount Hampden on his retirement from that responsible office. The Memorial was one of the last designs of the late Sir G. Gilbert Scott, R.A. (brother of the Vicar of Wisbech at that time) and it bears some resemblance to one of his earlier works, the Martyrs' Memorial at Oxford. The architect did not live to see its completion and the work was finished under the direction of his son, Mr. John Oldrid Scott, at a cost of £2,035. Messrs. Pattinson, of Ruskington, near Sleaford, were the contractors, the amount of their tender, without the statue and bas reliefs, being £1,400. It is a beautiful reproduction of fifteenth century Gothic, the statue standing upon a lofty pedestal under an arched canopy, surmounted by a pierced and crocketed spire with pinnacles and finials rising to a height of about 70 feet. The sculpture of the figure itself, which is rather more than life-size, and of the bas reliefs of Granville Sharpe, William Wilberforce (to whom a memorial column is erected at Hull), and "The Suppliant"

occupying sunk panels on three sides of the pedestal, are very meritorious features of this elegantly proportioned monument. On the fourth side is the following inscription:—"Clarkson, born at Wisbech, 1760." The date of erection, 1880, is also on the front panel. On the west side, under the bas relief, "The Suppliant" is the inscription "Remember them that are in bonds." It is interesting to note that this panel, representing a chained negro in a supplicatory attitude, is a copy of a cameo designed by the clever artist, Hackwood, for the benefit of the Society for the Abolition of Slavery, and executed by Josiah Wedgwood, F.R.S., the famous potter, at Etruria, more than a hundred years ago. Benjamin Franklin, in acknowledging a copy of this cameo sent to him by Wedgwood, wrote:—"In distributing your valuable present of cameos among my friends, I have seen such marks of being affected by contemplating the figure of 'The Suppliant,' which is admirably executed, that I am persuaded it may have an effect equal to that of the best written pamphlet in procuring favour to these oppressed people." This cameo was one of the earliest and the most popular of Wedgwood's productions when it was issued. In Smiles's *Biography of Wedgwood* we are told that Thomas Clarkson had a long correspondence with Wedgwood upon the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Clarkson having been engaged for seven years in the agitation was considering whether he ought to continue his efforts or retire into private life. His mind and body had been greatly injured and, though comparatively a poor man, he had expended not less than £1,500. If he met the numerous calls made upon him he said he must be inevitably ruined. Wedgwood generously helped Clarkson and cheered by the production of this cameo, the prime mover of Slavery Abolition pursued his course with cheerfulness, ultimately accomplishing the object of his life.

The actual height of this monument, which is situated in the centre of a spacious approach to the Bridge was taken by the late Mr. Pooley, Borough Surveyor, at 68½ feet to the top of the cross. For comparison, it may be also be noted that Wisbech Church is 90 feet high and Mr. Mills' Brewery chimney 80 feet. In a subsequent chapter giving some biographical notes of worthies associated with Wisbech, will be found a reference to Thomas Clarkson's life.

A memorial column erected in the Park, near to the Lynn Road, commemorates the services of a prominent townsman who died in 1871. Mr. Richard Young had represented Cambridge-shire in Parliament for three years, was five times Mayor of



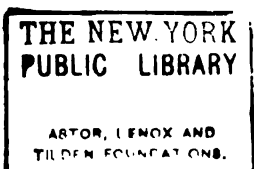
*From an engraving by J. Cichew.*  
**Portrait of THOMAS CLARKSON**  
*Master of Wilkes, 1790, the abductor of the Emancipation of Slaves.*



**THE  
 CLARKSON  
 MEMORIAL.**

*From photo by H. R. Mcken.*

**PORTRAIT OF THOMAS CLARKSON.  
 THE CLARKSON MEMORIAL AND TOWN HALL.**



Wisbech, and at the time of his death had just been chosen Sheriff of London and Middlesex. He was also a Justice of the Peace for both Norfolk and the Isle of Ely. A drinking fountain on the Park side forms part of the memorial, which was inaugurated on October 31st, 1872, in the presence of the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Sills Gibbons, who was accompanied by Sir Francis Truscott and Sir John Bennett, ex-Sheriffs of London, Dr. Brady, M.P., and many local gentlemen. The subscribers to this memorial included the Right Hon. the Speaker, the Marquis of Salisbury, Right Hon. John Bright, M.P., Mr. Hugh Childers, M.P., the Lord Mayor, Sir Edwd. Watkin, Bart., Dr. Brady, M.P., and Ald. Lawrence, M.P. Mr. John Brown, J.P., was Chairman of the Committee, and the Rev. Jas. Smith acted as Hon. Secretary. It was erected from the designs of Mr. J. Wallis Chapman, of London, the builder being Mr. John Whitehead, of London, and the cost of it was about £300. Eleven years after its completion, on December 11th, 1883, the memorial column was blown over during the night, in a strong gale of wind, but was re-erected under the direction of a local committee, and from the plans of Mr. Hatchard Smith, of London, some slight alterations being made in the design to add to its strength and security. The inscriptions on the base of the memorial are as follow :—

Memorial to  
 ALD. RICHARD YOUNG, J.P., D.L.,  
 Born 1809. Died 1871.  
 M.P. for Cambridgeshire 1865—1868.  
 Mayor of Wisbech 1858—1863.  
 Sheriff of London and Middlesex 1871.  
 Erected by Subscription, 1872.  
 FREDC. FORD, Mayor.  
 Restored 1885.  
 FREDC. PEATLING, Mayor.  
 A Memorial Tribute from Many Friends.  
 'Indignante, invidia forebit justus.'

The Drinking Fountain erected on the Market Place was provided by a legacy left by the Rev. Henry Jackson, Vicar of Wisbech St. Mary, who desired that it should perpetuate the memory of his father and mother, the Rev. Jeremiah Jackson and Mrs. Jackson. It was opened on October 27th, 1879, by the Mayor, the late Ald. J. W. Stanley, in the presence of the Corporation, the Town Clerk, and other gentlemen. It cannot be regarded as an ornamental feature of the Market Place, the design being



apparently intended to have conveyed the idea of rough hewn stone, and to be placed among foliage. Such a site, for instance, as the Park, would have been more suitable than its present position. A piece of sculptured marble, representing Arabs giving water to their steeds, is placed just above the drinking trough for horses and cattle. Over the drinking fountain, on the other side, is the inscription, "The gift of Henry Jackson, M.A., 1878."

Another ornamental feature was added to the town in the Jubilee year of 1897, in the shape of a drinking fountain, erected in the Old Market, and presented by Mrs. S. J. Pocock and Mrs. Prankard, in memory of their parents, the late Mr. and Mrs. G. D. Collins, of the South Brink, Wisbech. Mr. Collins had for many years practised as a solicitor in the town, and was for a long period Clerk to the Board of Guardians. The fountain was designed, executed, and erected by Mr. Henry Hugh Armstead, R.A., sculptor. It is in the Renaissance style, designed to provide water for men, horses, dogs, and sheep. The main structure is of red Mansfield stone, and the vase for men, horses, &c., with the ornamental and inscription panels, are of hard Sicilian marble. The fountain is surmounted by an elaborately decorated cap-stone and finial. The fish panel is a representation of gurnauts playing in water, and has within a small panel, the following quotation from Timon of Athens, "Honest water, which ne'er left man i' the mire." The following inscription is on the companion panel, "Erected in memory of George Duppa Collins and Mary Anne Collins, for many years resident in this town, by their loving daughters." Finally, above the horse trough is the quotation from Proverbs 12th chapter 10th verse, "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast." The fountain was formally handed over to the Corporation on Thursday, June 17th, 1897. Previously to proceeding to the site of the fountain, a special meeting of the Town Council was held, attended by Mr. and Mrs. S. J. Pocock, Dr. and Mrs. Prankard, the Vicar (Rev. R. E. R. Watts), the sculptor (Mr. Armstead), with the Mayor (Mr. E. B. Bellars), and a large number of aldermen and councillors. Resolutions were passed taking over the fountain and afterwards there was an adjournment to the Old Market, where Mrs. Pocock, on behalf of her sister and herself, asked the acceptance by the Corporation of the gift. Jointly, the monument was unveiled by these ladies and the water set flowing, the Mayor appropriately acknowledging the gift to the town. Mr. S. J. Pocock and Dr. Prankard also spoke of the object for

which the memorial had been erected, and expressed the hope that it would prove a benefit to the inhabitants for many years to come.

#### ASSEMBLY ROOMS.

The provision of a suitable assembly room for the borough led to the formation of the Public Hall Company, the foundation stone of which was laid on September 11th, 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition, by the Mayor (Dr. Whitsed), who was presented with a silver trowel for the purpose by the architect, Mr. Utting. During the progress of the building, the marked insecurity of the roof necessitated the employment of Mr. Pilkington, another architect, who ordered it to be removed, and fresh plans were adopted to thoroughly strengthen it. The opening took place on November 3rd, 1852, the Earl of Aboyne, afterwards Marquis of Huntley, presiding, accompanied by Dr., afterwards Sir Austin Henry Layard, famous for his researches in Nineveh,\* Mr. George Cruikshank, the clever caricaturist, Mr. Baynes, Nottingham, and several local gentlemen. A luncheon in the Lecture Room was afterwards served, followed later by a meeting, at which Mr. William Peckover presided, Dr. Layard and Mr. Cruikshank delivering appropriate speeches. On the following day, a soirée took place, under Mr. Thos. Dawbarn's presidency, Mr. Paxton Hood, a well-known lecturer, and Mr. G. Cruikshank speaking during the evening, one feature of the gathering being the heartiness of the cheers given to express approval of the part taken by Mr. George Dawbarn in promoting this important addition to the public buildings of Wisbech. At a subsequent meeting of shareholders it was stated that the building had cost £1,900, of which shares and donations had provided £1,300, and

\* At the entrance to the Nimrod Gallery of the British Museum a lion and bull are to be seen, winged and man-headed, which were brought by the explorer, Sir Henry Layard, from the palace of Ashur-nasir-pal, at Ninrod, forming part of that traveller's discoveries in Nineveh. The excavations were made under trying conditions, Sir Henry having to pass many hours in the trenches when the thermometer registered from 112 degrees to 115 degrees in the shade. Of the treasures he recovered, he had no means of removing such huge sculptures and he resolved to attempt the transport of these two—the lion and the bull—which were the smallest and best preserved. A carpenter was sent to the neighbouring mountains to fell mulberry trees and a rude conveyance was built, upon which the figures were dragged to the river by the Arabs. Sir Henry, with some difficulty, persuaded a raftsmen from Bagdad to construct a raft for each piece of sculpture, each raft being held together by 600 dried sheep and goat skins. Both bull and lion were in this way floated down to Bagdad whence they were transported direct to England. The Romance of the Museums by W. G. Fitzgerald in *Strand Magazine* for March, 1896.

an Art Exhibition of a very interesting character was organised in March, 1853, the sum of £217 being taken at the doors, and the proceeds applied to the reduction of the outlay upon the building. On November 17th, 1879, the Public Hall Society was formed into a Limited Liability Company, the shares being of the nominal value of £2. It is now licensed by the County Council, structural alterations having been made, including the opening of an emergency door, the enlargement of the exits, and the provision of other safeguards in case of accident. The length of the principal hall was 70 feet exclusive of a semi-circular recessed platform extending backward 11 feet, and the width of the room about 41 feet. During the summer of 1895, a considerable extension of the Public Hall was carried out under the direction of Mr. Jas. Kerridge, Mr. E. Girling being the contractor. The platform was enlarged and retiring rooms built on each side, affording greatly improved accommodation. The roof was also repaired and improved, the works being carried out at a considerable cost. Mr. George Dawbarn has been the Chairman of the Company from its erection, and the Secretary is Mr. Alfred Southwell. The Hall seats about 800 people and the Lecture Room 200. Amongst other entertainments which have taken place in this building, it may be remarked that in January, 1855, Mrs. Fanny Kemble read Shakespeare's "Henry the Fifth" in the Public Hall to a large audience. Concerts have also been given at which Madame Grisi, Mr. Sims Reeves, and other famous *artistes* have appeared. From 1850 to 1881, the Mechanics' Institute was held in this building, under the management of a committee, which organised reading and debating societies, lectures, concerts and educational movements, as well as providing a library. When it was found that the Working Men's Institute was supplying the needs of the town and district, the Mechanics' Institute was dissolved and its library was handed over to the larger organization. A Young Men's Christian Association was also held at the Public Hall in the early part of its existence.

Early in 1857, the scheme for the erection of a Corn Exchange was initiated, the first directors being Messrs. J. Brown, R. Young, W. Moore, W. Sharpe, Alexander Peckover, H. Wooll, H. Morton, T. S. Watson, R. C. Catling, H. W. Ward, and T. Knights. The Corporation offered the Exchange Hall on a 75 years' lease and after taking a poll, the site was accepted by the shareholders by a vote of 342 to 181. Mr. Bellamy, of Messrs. Bellamy and Hardy, of Lincoln, was the architect. The building which is about 190 feet long and about

50 feet wide was completed and opened on July 29th, 1858, when a dinner was held under the presidency of the Mayor (Mr. Thomas Steed Watson) and on the following day a flower show and fête took place on Mr. Phillips' lawn on the North Brink, the band of the Coldstream Guards from London being present. A profit of £38 was realised by this successful gathering. The Hall has been used, not only as a Corn-market House but as a Volunteer Drill Hall, an assembly room for holding of flower or poultry shows, and occasionally of entertainments. It was probably filled to its utmost capacity when the late Mr. C. H. Spurgeon preached in it on October 1st, 1863, when the vestibule, as well as the Exchange itself, was so crowded that people stood outside on the road vainly endeavouring to hear the speaker. It was estimated that somewhere about 2,000 persons were present on that occasion. The building being only leasehold, of which about half the term is expired, the shares are progressively of a diminishing value, worth at the present time, perhaps, £2 or £3 each. Ald. F. Ford is Chairman of the Board of Directors, and Mr. Francis Jackson, Secretary to the Company.

An addition has lately been made to the assembly rooms of the borough by the purchase and erection by Mr. John Baker, of Wisbech, of Selwyn Hall. It was originally built for Captain Selwyn, M.P. for the Wisbech Division, at Eastwood, March, at a cost of over £1,000, by the Willesden Wire-wove Company, and was sold by public auction (on the death of Capt. Selwyn), to Mr. Baker, for £165. The Hall, which was at first fitted with the electric light, the plant being separately disposed of and sold elsewhere, was taken down and brought to Wisbech, where it was erected on land held on a lease by Mr. Baker. An entrance hall and reception room on each side are entirely new additions, and the building has been enlarged and improved in re-erection. The hall is 100 feet long by 40 feet wide and 40 feet high, and will seat 800 persons. With its stage, dressing rooms, &c., it has been very completely fitted, and the building is well lighted and warmed. It was opened in January, 1895, by a dramatic performance, and one of the earliest of the entertainments was a Grand Children's Party organized by the Rev. A. Izard and Miss Newsham, in aid of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which realized a handsome sum.

#### THE OLD THEATRE.

Behind the School of Art, with an entrance from Great Church Street, is a building known as the Old Theatre, once

frequented by lovers of the histrionic art, but lately simply utilized for storage purposes, formerly as a granary for seed, and more recently for storing tents. This building was erected in 1793, and for 50 years was annually visited by the Lincoln Company, under Mr. T. Robertson, and after his death, his widow continued the arrangement. Previous to the erection of this Theatre, a building in Pickard's Lane, afterwards purchased by Mr. Jonathan Peckover, sen., and converted into a barn, had been used for theatrical purposes. In 1847, it was opened by a Norwich Company, but although several actors of eminence have performed in it, it never proved a successful venture.

The experiences in Wisbech of an eminent English tragedian may be quoted. W. C. Macready in his *Reminiscences and Selections from his "Diaries and Letters,"* published in 1875,\* writes of his visit to the Theatre at Wisbech as follows:—

June 12th, 1836.

Started for Downham in the Lynn mail. I felt relieved by the removal of all compulsion to think, and idled or slept away the night, catching occasional glimpses of the long stretch of flat, rich country, and having one delightful glance at the beautiful lanthorn of Ely Cathedral.

Wisbech, June 13th.

Was awoke in passing through the street of Downham. Left the mail, and set out in a chaise over the flat fenny tract under the dike (or bank) of a river, sleeping until I reached the last milestone from Wisbech. It was seven o'clock when I got to the inn, made myself a little more comfortable, breakfasted, and began to make up arrears of journal, in which I occupied myself till preparing for rehearsal. Mr. Robertson called, having hunted me out, and gave me very cheering hopes of our houses here, where he says a great excitement is produced. I am not used to produce "excitements," but my penny trumpet has a sound of awe among Liliputians—is it not so? Went to rehearsal, where I very nearly fell asleep as I stood upon the stage in the scene with Osric. I very nearly fell, so completely was I worn down. Dr. Southwood Smith called and left his card, and I also found a note from Mrs. Hill, inviting me to supper after the play. Mr. Leach, the Mayor, also called, and was liberal in his proffers of attention. I answered Mrs. Hill's note, accepting her invitation, and gave Mr. Robertson a book of *Ion*. I lay down after dinner to sleep on the sofa, and after an hour's sleep was obliged to bestir myself—oh, how reluctantly! Acted Hamlet with a load on every limb, sore feet, and my mind in a doze. I was dissatisfied with myself and everyone about me. Went to supper with Mrs. Hill; met Dr. Southwood Smith and his son and daughter, the latter I liked extremely; passed an agreeable evening.

\* Volume 2, page 37.

June 14th.

Went to the Theatre and acted Virginius passably to a very good house. Dentatus had to play a fop in the farce, and he anticipated it in the tragedy, making the Roman Achilles a coxcomb!

June 15th.

Went to the Theatre and met the several checks to the abandonment of myself to Macbeth, with tolerable evenness. The thought of darling Catherine (his first wife) when a girl, as her face looked at me in this very play, arose and pleased my fancy for a short time. Mrs. Hill sent to invite me to supper; I could not go. I find it quite true, as Forster says, that the performance of a character is my day. I can do nothing else of any moment when I have an important part to act. I cannot do it.

On July 3rd, 1846, it is recorded that Mr. Robertson's Theatrical Company performed a play written by Dr. Whitsed, a well-known medical practitioner, and subsequently Mayor of the Borough, the title of the play being "Mind how you Wed!"

Some years ago the Theatre became the property of Mr. Peckover, and its adaptation for the construction of Public Baths, or in connection with the School of Art, have often been suggested, but until recently nothing has been arranged. In July, 1897, the School of Science and Art acquired the property on lease, and made considerable alterations at a cost of about £150, to adapt it to educational needs. When it came into their possession, it had four whitewashed walls and a roof, with the time-worn remains of the stage and gallery just as it was left after having been used as a theatre. Underneath it are large cellars for storage, and on the north side stables have been built, which were occupied, as well as the Theatre by Mr. Saunders, who carried on the tent industry, a flourishing one in the town and neighbourhood. The convenient situation and spaciousness of the Old Theatre, which is adjacent to the present School of Art, promise to make it a valuable acquisition in carrying on the growing work of technical and secondary education in Wisbech and neighbourhood.

#### THE FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

The benefits of the Friendly Societies' movement in Wisbech are so generally recognised that a few words as to its progress may be desirable. These organizations have been of great value in stimulating independence, thrift, and industry, providing for the assistance of their members in sickness or old age, and of the widows and children of deceased members. During the last half century considerable advantages have been made both in numbers,

efficiency of administration, and in the benefits derived from them, the Legislature having encouraged their growth by the passing of measures designed to promote their independence and stability.

The Loyal Order of Ancient Shepherds, Ashton and Wisbech Unities Federated, was founded in 1826, when the first meeting was held at the Friendship Inn, Ashton-under-Lyme. At the second meeting on the 3rd February following, the name of the Society was decided upon, and was connected with the fact that the first meeting was held on Christmas Day, and its association with the shepherds watching their flocks by night on the plains of Bethlehem. The following resolution was passed:— "That this Society having held its first meeting on Christmas Day for the purpose of proclaiming glad tidings to future generations, it is resolved that it shall henceforth be entitled 'The Society of Ancient Shepherds.'" The number of members, lodges and districts increased rapidly, and at the close of 1895, the Ashton Unity had 97 districts, 938 lodges, and 95,591 members spread over the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the West Indies and Bermuda. At the annual meeting of the two Unities in 1888, a Federation was arranged by which the members of either Unity could visit and pay their monies into the lodges of the other, and it was arranged that each Unity should be represented at the annual meeting of the other; also that both should contribute to one relief fund. By this time Wisbech had six districts, 104 lodges, and 14,191 members. This federation made the Ashton Unity the fourth affiliated order in size in the Kingdom, and the Wisbech Unity secured the advantage of association with the officers and members of the larger Society. The combined Unities represent 103 districts, 1,042 lodges, and 142,602 members, of whom 109,782 are ordinary, 4,642 honorary, and 28,178 juveniles. The benefit funds amounted to £467,856, the lodge funds of the Ashton Unity being £307,898, and of the Wisbech Unity, £78,786. The Wisbech Unity has paid during 1895, in sick benefits £10,013; funeral benefits, £16,514; medical aid, £2,199. We are indebted for the foregoing particulars to an interesting pamphlet mainly written by Bro. Musson, Treasurer of the Unity, and published previous to the A.M.C. of the two Unities. Bro. W. M. Boulton, Junr., J.P., Chief Shepherd, Wisbech; R. W. Allpress, Deputy Chief Shepherd, Fenstanton; and John W. Faircloth, Cor. Sec., are the other officers of the Wisbech Unity.

The first Lodge opened in Wisbech in 1838, was the Friendly

Fountain, No. 211, of the Ashton Unity and still No. 1 of the Wisbech Unity, which made the earliest beginning with only six members. By the next year it had attained to 53 members and Wisbech had been created a district. The Shepherds' Increase Lodge commenced with five members, withdrawn from the former lodge. This lodge celebrated its Jubilee in September, 1889, when Bro. H. Musson, one of its early members, gave a *résumé* of its fifty years' work. The Orient Lodge was established in 1840, and in 1847, Cambridge was made into a district with seven lodges, forming a part of the Wisbech District. At the annual meeting held in March, 1848, at South Elmsall, the Wisbech District seceded from the Ashton Unity, and from that time worked independently, though a strong desire had often been expressed (to which the late Bro. W. P. Bays once publicly referred, and which was further strengthened by the presence of Bros. Bell and Boulton at the Jubilee meeting at Ashton-under-Lyne) that a re-union of the Wisbech and Ashton Unity should take place. It may also be mentioned that Bro. H. Musson has been appointed a Public Friendly Societies' Auditor, and that he possesses authority from the Government to act in that capacity in assisting any lodge that may require his help in their financial arrangements.

A memorable event in the history of Wisbech Friendly Societies was the holding of the Annual A.M.C. of the Loyal Order of Ancient Shepherds at Wisbech in 1897. For several days, from 150 to 200 delegates from all parts of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales were entertained, and at their daily meetings were engaged in discussing alterations and improvements in the administration and rules of the Order. Fifty-one years previously this Annual Assembly of the Societies' delegates had taken place in the Borough, and on the second occasion of showing hospitality to this Order, no effort was spared to make the A.M.C. successful and to provide for the comfort and entertainment of the visitors. It was two years after the last Annual Parliament at Wisbech that the Wisbech and Cambridge districts seceded from the Ashton Unity, the latter by far the larger of the two—but in 1888, the Unities were again federated, becoming as to size the fourth affiliated Order in the Kingdom, comprising, in 1895, 142,602 members, with benefit funds amounting to nearly half a million of money. The initial function of this second A.M.C. at Wisbech was the reception of the delegates by the Mayor and Mayoress (Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Bellars) when they arrived on Saturday evening, June 5th, 1897,



and the presentation of a costly banner, emblematic of the Order. This took place at the Town Hall, where each delegate as he arrived was received by the Mayor and Mayoress. The company included the Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire (Mr. Alexander Peckover, LL.D., F.S.A.), and the leading representatives of the town and county, the Clergy and Nonconformist Ministers, several of whom, including the Mayor, wore honorary members' badges and collars. Following a cordial speech of welcome by the Mayor, the presentation took place by the Lord Lieutenant (who had a few days previously been initiated a member of the Order) of a pair of silver scissors to the Mayoress, who thereupon severed the ribbon of the covering of the handsome banner which that lady presented. There was an outburst of applause as the covering fell from the beautiful banner which was made of English silk, dyed, wound, warped, and woven upon the premises of Messrs. Tutill, London, the designs being illustrative of the devices and mottoes of Shepherdry. A vote of thanks to the Mayor and Mayoress was carried with the accompaniment of the "Shepherds Fire," and votes of thanks concluded a pleasant assembly. The delegates then dispersed to their various billets in the town, adequate accommodation having been provided by the Cor. Sec., Mr. J. W. Faircloth and a committee. Sunday was the occasion of one of the largest church parades of Shepherds and members of kindred societies that has ever been held in the town. The Corn Exchange was the place of meeting, and included in the procession were the two Chief Shepherds, Bro. E. Sage (Ashton), and Bro. W. M. Boulton (Wisbech), the Mayor, the Lord Lieutenant, bands, &c., whilst at the head was carried the banner which had been presented on the previous evening. A special sermon on Shepherdry was delivered by Archdeacon Emery, and an appeal on behalf of the North Cambs. Hospital and the Royal Lifeboat Institution resulted in £9 5s. being realized. On Monday the delegates commenced business in earnest, this being the 71st annual business meeting of the Ashton Unity. Bro. E. Sage (Chief Shepherd) of Bristol, presided, and amongst other chief officers, he was supported by Bro. W. M. Boulton, the Chief Shepherd of the Wisbech Unity. The principal business on this day was to receive the Chief Shepherd's address, which stated that it was the first time for nearly 50 years that they were holding the Annual Parliaments of their two Unities conjointly. Numerical and financial prosperity were again stated to be the features of the year's work, and he

congratulated the whole Order on the general improvement made by those branches and districts which were tabulated as being in an insolvent condition at the date of the last Quinquennial Valuation. In the course of the meeting, the Mayor and Mayoress (Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Bellars), the Vicar (Rev. R. E. R. Watts), Nonconformist Ministers, and representatives of kindred societies, entered the room and were accorded a hearty reception. Later they offered words of welcome to the delegates, who afterwards proceeded to discuss the Chief Shepherd's report, as well as that of the General Secretary. At the conclusion of Monday's business, the delegates were conveyed by special saloons on the G.E.R. to Ely. The members of the various Shepherds Lodges in the Cathedral City gathered on the Market Hill and headed by the Littleport brass band, marched to the railway station to meet the visitors. The City was paraded, the new banner given by the Mayoress of Wisbech heading the procession. A meat tea in the Public Room preceded an open meeting, when Dr. Stubbs (Dean of Ely) took the chair, and delivered an address in which he congratulated the Order upon the position it had attained. Upon the return of the party to Wisbech, a smoking concert was held at the Friendship Inn, when the "colts" at the Conference (the new delegates) of which there were a good number, were "further instructed in the mysteries of the Order." Tuesday was a heavy business day and Bro. M. McKinnon, D.C.S. (City of Glasgow) was elected Chief Shepherd, and Bro. McNicol, D.C.S. Belfast was chosen as the seat of the next A.M.C., and other matters connected with Shepherdry discussed with considerable vigour. After a long day's business, the delegates dispersed, to re-assemble at the Wisbech Castle, where they were hospitably entertained by the occupier, Mr. F. W. Bradley, and following an agreeable repast, explored the subterranean passages and cells belonging to former Castles. In the course of the proceedings, the Lord Lieutenant (Mr. Alexander Peckover) read an excellent paper which he had prepared on the present and past of Wisbech Castle. He traced the history of the buildings from the first erection by William the Conqueror to the present time, and illustrated his remarks by the aid of a plan of the old Castle grounds and drawings of Thurloe's Castle, back and front, for which lecture he was accorded a hearty vote of thanks. Later in the evening, the Kindred Societies in the town entertained the delegates to a "Smoking at Home" in the Public Hall. At Wednesday's meeting, Bro. J. W. Faircloth read his report as secretary to the

Wisbech Unity, and in the afternoon, a trip to Hunstanton followed, delegates and guests being entertained to tea at the new Town Hall by Bro. W. M. Boulton, C.S. of the Wisbech Unity. Thursday was a day of almost purely business character, relieved by a visit of several of the leading ladies of the town, when Miss Bays (daughter of the late Bro. W. P. Bays, a valued pioneer worker in the Order) expressed her wish for their success. What was described as a "memorable banquet" took place in the evening at the Public Hall, provided by the Committee who had the local arrangements in hand. No banquet on a larger scale, nor one catered for in more admirable fashion, had taken place since the function in connection with the visit of the Archaeological Association in 1878. The Lord Lieutenant (Bro. Alex. Peckover) presided, and the delegates enjoyed a most pleasant evening. The business on Friday consisted of the finishing of the agenda, votes of thanks and a smoking concert at the Friendship Inn in the evening. On the Wednesday and Thursday, the delegates to the 49th annual meeting of the Wisbech Unity held meetings in an adjacent room and discussed the reports and the general business in connection with the Unity. The week will be long remembered by the Unities as one of the most successful assemblies that they have held during recent years, and the arrangements of Bros. Boulton, H. Musson, and J. W. Faircloth, and the other officers of the Order, were admirably devised and carried through. During the sittings of the Committee, the *Advertiser* had special daily illustrated issues, and each member was presented with a book containing views of the town and neighbourhood.

Oddfellowship was introduced into Wisbech in 1837, when the Neptune Lodge was opened by the Northampton District on the 29th of March. In the following year, the Neptune Lodge was raised to the status of a District, which gave it the power of instituting Lodges, which it immediately exercised by opening three the same year at Peterborough, Lynn and Boston. In the succeeding year another lodge was inaugurated at Wisbech (The Anchor of Hope) and others at Cambridge, Whittlesey, Long Sutton and Holbeach. In quick succession lodges were also opened at Bury St. Edmunds, Barton Bendish, Donington, Crowland, Swaffham, St. Ives, Thetford, Newmarket, &c. While the Wisbech District was thus energetic in establishing new branches, it was as generous in allowing them to form fresh Districts, to spread more effectively the benefits of the Order. In 1841, Peterborough, Lynn, and Boston, with the lodges contiguous, each formed dis-

inct Districts, and in the following year the Cambridge and Bury St. Edmund's Districts were formed, and Whittlesey, Long Sutton, Swaffham and St. Ives quickly followed. Thus seven Districts have been detached from the radius originally occupied by the Wisbech District, and Wisbech may justly be proud of having introduced Oddfellowship over so wide an area, and into towns much larger than itself—134 lodges, with 28,950 members, being contained in the Districts opened by Father "Neptune," as the lodge is sometimes called. The Lodges now in the Wisbech District number 17, with 3,600 adult members, 461 juveniles, and 62 members in the Female Lodge. The funds amount to £41,469 19s. 1d. Of these 17 lodges, four are in Wisbech, two at Chatteris, and one each at March, Manea, Welney, Benwick, Doddington, Leverington, Upwell, Outwell, Downham Market, and Littleport. In the Wisbech lodges alone there are 1,536 members, or about one-sixth of the population. That the numerical record of the Order in this neighbourhood is so satisfactory, is no doubt due to the District having been prompt in adopting the tables of payments according to the ages of the entrants, and also having been one of the first Districts to open Juvenile and Female Lodges. The advocacy of these matters and their adoption was largely due to the late Mr. James Balding, who was Corresponding Secretary of the District for over forty years. The District was also fortunate in having the support of such persons as the late Rev. Canon Hopkins and the late Mr. Jonathan Peckover, both of whom, having thoroughly investigated the financial basis of the Society, became warm promoters. To the latter is due the very prosperous lodge at the Working Men's Institute. At the last valuation of the lodges in the District under the provisions of the Friendly Societies Acts, nine of the lodges showed a surplus of £5,956. Six lodges have deficiencies, the largest deficiency being due to a loss of capital, but even in this instance it is one-third removed from the limit at which the rules of the Order require action to be taken. On the whole very few Districts in the Order stand higher than does the Wisbech District of the Oddfellows' Order.

There are three female lodges, which meet at the Working Men's Institute. One of these, the Imperial Female Lodge is associated with the Oddfellows' Order, and the other two, the Friendly Refuge Shepherdesses Court and Friendly Union Court, with the Shepherds. Several juvenile lodges have been lately formed among the Oddfellows and Shepherds, one of the former having about 300 members.

Forestry was first introduced in Wisbech in 1841, when on February 15th, the Court Brave William Tell, 1195, "Of the Ancient Order of Foresters, Lynn and West Norfolk District," was formed at the Old Bell Hotel, and 66 members were enrolled. The members and funds however fell off in later years, until 1860, when a fresh start was made and up to the present time, they have been progressing rapidly. The membership of this lodge is now upwards of 400. Mr. Wm. Barker, Market Place, is the oldest member on the books and the next is the secretary, Mr. Wm. Alcock, who has held the position he now occupies for 35 years. A remarkable fact is that although Mr. Alcock has been connected with the Order for so many years, he has only received a few shillings in benefits from the Lodge. In 1884, the Foresters had the largest numerical strength of any Friendly Society in the United Kingdom, although financially speaking they were below the Oddfellows, who had a larger amount of funds and accumulated income. There is only one Court of Foresters in Wisbech but as the figures show, it is in a flourishing condition, both numerically and financially.

Perhaps one of the highest testimonies to the value of the Friendly Societies will be found in the Report of the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, in which it is declared that the best means of providing for the aged poor, in the future, are to be found in the assisting and advancement of every effort of the Friendly Societies, with a view of including within their membership as large a proportion of the population as possible. Some Friendly Societies however, discourage Government aid, possibly because it is thought the Government would require to have a voice in the management.

Another organization which aims at dispensing charity where needed, and promoting brotherly help, chiefly in a higher grade of society, is that of the Freemason brotherhood. The United Good Fellowship Lodge of Freemasons, 809, with Chapter attached, was originated at Wisbech, on April 11th, 1860, when the Rev. Mr. Ward, Chaplain to the Grand Lodge, conducted the consecration of the Lodge, and Dr. Whitsed, a well-known medical practitioner, was installed the first Worshipful Master. The Mayor (Mr. Richard Young) was initiated the first member, and among those who attended was Bro. Bell, aged 94, who was P.M. 50 years before, and sole survivor of a former Wisbech Lodge. The Freemasons meet at the Rose and Crown Hotel, and usually hold their annual banquet in April, previous to which the new Worshipful Master is installed.

## PUBLIC AND OTHER CHARITIES.

Considerable benefactions have been left to the inhabitants of Wisbech for the help and encouragement of the industrious and deserving poor. Probably few towns of its size have received so large bequests from benevolent individuals as those which are here described necessarily in a brief form. A work was published some 75 years ago, entitled *Some Account of the Principal Public Charities of Wisbech St. Peter*, by the Rev. Jeremiah Jackson, M.A., vicar of Swaffham-cum-Bulbeck, and of Elm-cum-Emneth, which gives an account in detail of the principal Charities then in existence. Additional information is to be found in the Report to the Crown of the Commissioners appointed for inquiring concerning Charities, No. 31, dated 4th February, 1837, and there have been numerous subsequent changes of which no public record is to be found.

The particulars of the Charities, which follow, have been taken partly from the work on the Wisbech Charities and the Commissioners' Report before referred to, and partly from information supplied to us by Mr. Edward Hugh Jackson, Clerk to the Governing Bodies of the principal Charities as now constituted, and a grandson of the Rev. Jeremiah Jackson, the author of the work on the Charities before referred to.

THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.—In the charter granted to Wisbech by Edward VI in 1549, and subsequently confirmed in the charter of Charles II, it was ordained that there should be in the town a school or place of learning for the instruction of youth in grammatical and polite learning, and also a schoolmaster learned in the Latin and Greek tongues, who should institute, teach and instruct without exception, boys and youth, resorting and assembling there, in grammatical learning and the Greek and Latin tongues freely, and without any demand. The stipend of the master was to be £12 per annum, his nomination was vested in the Ten Capital Burgesses, and ten other persons having voices in the election of the Capital Burgesses, and the Bishop of Ely was to be the visitor. The Governing Body of the town provided a school-room, school-house, and premises, and the endowments of the school comprise an allotment of land in Wisbech, in Crab Marsh, Sir Miles Sandys' Charity, John Crane's Charity for the Schoolmaster, and William Holmes' Charity for Exhibitions. The school is now regulated by a scheme of the Charity Commissioners under the Endowed Schools Acts, approved by her Majesty in Council, 27th November, 1878. There is a stable and yard, part of the school premises, let off at £3 a year. The allotment in

Crab Marsh contains 4a. 2r. 22p., let for £25 a year. Sir Miles Sandys' Charity includes 20a. 3r. 31p. in Town Field, and 7a. 3r. 14p. in New Field in Elm, let for £50 a year. Crane's Charity produces about £30 a year, being a moiety of the income derivable from £1,615 Consols and eight acres of land in Wisbech High Fen. The Corporation pays to the Governing Body the annual sum of £46 10s. 6d. in commutation for the cost of repairs, rates, taxes, and insurance of the school premises, and the annual sum of £12 payable under the charter. William Holmes' Charity, originally a gift of £400, to be invested in land for the provision of two scholarships at Magdalene College, Cambridge, is now represented by 46 acres at Holbeach, known as the Clays Farms, letting for £80 per annum (producing £70 net), and £7,252 Consols, yielding £199. The present scheme provides that the Governors should consist of six representative and three nominated governors, that the Head Master should receive a yearly stipend (now £75) with capitation grant of not less than £3 each boy in the junior department and £6 in the senior, and that four exhibitions, one falling vacant yearly, of the annual value of £70, to be increased to £75 when the income admits, should be maintained out of the income of William Holmes' Charity. The accounts for 1896 show that there are 60 scholars in the school, and that there is a balance in favour of the Charity on the General Foundation Accounts of £65. The repairs of the school buildings, which have been for many years past in a dilapidated condition, have involved heavy expenditure and a liability of about £90 has to be met. The new Grammar School on the South Brink, to which a Master's residence is attached, is now nearly completed, and further reference will be found to it on page 236 of this work.

THE MUNICIPAL CHARITIES.—Most of the other charities which were under the control of the Ten Capital Burgesses, the governing body of the town at the time of the passing of the Municipal Corporation Act of 1835, were then transferred to a new body known as the Trustees of the Municipal Charities. These are the following:—Crane's Charity, Three Tuns Estate, founded by John Crane, a Cambridge apothecary, who, in 1651, bequeathed to Wisbech, his native town, an inn, which was his property, then known as the Black Bull, on the Market Hill, afterwards as the Three Tuns, with oil-mills, barn, stables, &c., belonging, one half of the revenue to amend the schoolmaster's wages of the free school, and the other moiety to be laid out in buying corn and firing for the poor. In the year 1802 the Capital Bur-

gesses sold the property in the town, and invested the proceeds. The Charity Estate now consists of £1,659 Consols, producing £45 4s. 9d., and 7a. 3r. 20p. of land, an allotment in Wisbech High Fen, made in respect of the estate in 1666, yielding £16 10s. The net income in 1896 was £60 10s. 10d., one moiety of which forms part of the endowment of the Grammar School, and the other moiety is distributed annually in flour and coals to about 200 recipients on St. Thomas' Day. The same donor gave the clear annual rents of an estate which he directed to be purchased, to five towns, of which Wisbech was one, the share of each town to be first applied in raising a sum of £200, to be lent out to young men in sums of £20 each to help them to set up, and then to be applied in relief of the poor. The estate was purchased in Fleet, and is now managed under an order of the Court of Chancery made in 1859. The £200 was raised long since. The loans have been of considerable service to rising tradesmen, but at the present time there is no loan outstanding and the capital is in the hands of the Trustees. The income is applied under an order of the Charity Commissioners in the repair of the almshouses under the control of the Trustees. The share of income falling to Wisbech is managed by the Trustees of the Municipal Charities; it produced in 1896 £57 4s., which was added to a balance of £69 0s. 1d. brought forward, and the expenditure comprised subscriptions to North Cambridgeshire Hospital, £10 10s.; and Hunstanton Convalescent Home, £5 5s.; cash to seven survivors on an old distribution list, £3 10s.; clothing to 60 recipients, £30; cash to 15 recipients, £7 10s.; leaving a balance to carry forward of £65 14s. 1d. Holmes' Charity Loan Fund consists of a sum of £300 left by William Holmes, whose name has been previously mentioned in connection with the Grammar School, for the purpose of being lent out in sums of £10 each to poor tradesmen, free of interest. At the present time there is no outstanding loan, and the fund consists of a sum of £211 12s. 6d. Consols, and a sum of £100 in hand. The income is applied under the order before referred to, in the repair of the Almshouses.

The Trustees have the charge of three sums of Consols, £108 13s. 11d. (Rayner's gift), £520 18s. (gift of Taylor and others), £160 15s. 4d. (gift of Dr. Jobson and others), and the management of 22½ acres of land at Leverington, yielding £42 10s., forming part of the endowment of the Boys' and Girls' National Schools, the total net income in 1896 being £48 8s. 6d., which was handed over to the Treasurer of the Schools.—



Also of £505 13s. 9d. Consols (Dr. Jobson's gift for the Church Sunday Schools and in 1896, £13 18s. being the amount of the dividend, was paid over to the Treasurer of the Schools.

The Trustees have the management of Scottred's Charity Land, 10a. 3r. 19p. arable, in Sayers' Field, Wisbech St. Mary, let at £18 a year, and receive the dividend on £111 15s. 3d. Consols purchased with the proceeds of sale of part of the land to the Peterborough and Wisbech Railway Company, and the charge of £101 2s. 9d. Consols (Loake's gift) amounting in all in 1896 to £23 17s., which after payment of outgoings and expenses left a balance of £18 8s. 2d., which was handed over to the Churchwardens of St. Peter's Church. The Trustees receive the dividend on £1,011 7s. 7d. Consols (Dr. Jobson's gift to the Dorcas Society) amounting to £27 16s. 4d., which is wholly paid over to the Treasurer of that Charity.

The Trustees also administer a large number of small charities classified together under the title of General Charities. These comprise Girdlestone's gift, £100 Consols, yielding £2 15s. annually, distributed in beef to ten recipients.—The Shambles Estate Charity, £500 Consols, representing the proceeds of sale of a site in the Market Place, granted by Queen Elizabeth as Lady of the Manor of Wisbech Barton for the use of the inhabitants of Wisbech, upon which the Shambles were erected, shown in an illustration in another part of this volume, the income of which £13 12s. 9d., is distributed annually to the poor, of whom there were 15 recipients in 1896.—Parke's Charity, consisting of £1,362 Consols and 2a. or. 25p. of land in Crab Marsh, Wisbech, yielding together £52 9s. 4d., distributed in 1896 in clothing to 28 recipients. This stock represents the proceeds of sale of a house in Ship Lane, now Upper Hill Street, left in 1620.—Royce's Charity Land left by Richard Royce, in 1669, consists of 15a. 1r. 12p. of land in Wisbech High Fen, yielding £25, which was distributed in 1896, in clothing to 15 recipients.—Elizabeth Steven's Charity, left by will (dated 1835) is invested in Consols, £498 14s. 11d. yielding £13 14s., and was paid in cash in 1896 to 15 recipients.—Johnson's Charity, £186 os. 10d. in Consols, producing £5 2s. was also paid in cash to 15 recipients.—Baxter's Charity, amounting to £1,428 12s. 7d. Consols, yielding £39 5s. 8d. was left by John Baxter, in 1793, to allow annually £10 each to poor old men or women totally incapacitated for labour, with an injunction that they attend divine worship every Sunday. Four annuitants are each in receipt of £10 annually. There are also Thurloe's gift amounting to £151 14s., the interest of which

is to be applied to putting out three apprentices annually; Loake's gift (1701) £101 2s. 9d., providing clothing for five recipients; Bend's gift (1605) £50 11s. 5d., the income of which is divided between the Feoffees of Wisbech St. Mary £1, 2s. and Parson 4s.; Williamson's gift, £26 19s. 6d.; Edward's gift, £10 2s. 3d.; Lord Saye and Sele's gift, £101 2s. 9d., given in clothing to five recipients; The Queen's Dole: Under the Charter of Edward VI it was ordered that a dole of £3 15s. should be annually distributed amongst widows, and that amount is received each year from the Corporation and disbursed in sums of 5s. each to 15 recipients.

The Trustees, upon whom the administration of the above estates devolve, are kept up to the original number of 15, and appointments are from time to time made to fill up vacancies caused by death and removal. The trustees now acting are, in the order of appointment, as follows:—Messrs. Alexander Peckover (Lord Lieutenant of Cambs), George Dawbarn, W. M. Rust, C. B. Anderson, W. S. Collins, F. Ford, Wm. Groom, T. P. Maxey, T. Patrick, and S. J. Pocock, the Rev. R. E. R. Watts, Messrs. F. Peatling and J. Leach, the Rev. A. Izard, and Mr. J. Goward.

WRIGHT'S CHARITY.—This charity which is administered by a separate body of trustees, was founded by Elizabeth Wright, of Wisbech, spinster, who by her will in 1732, vested in trustees certain lands in Wisbech, Leverington, Parson Drove, Sutton, Gedney, Wisbech Fen, and Tydd St. Mary, the rents and profits of a house in Wisbech to be applied for the benefit of the Charity School for boys, and the other rents to be applied to the payment of one guinea yearly to "the lecturer of Wisbech for preaching a sermon on St. Paul's Day, and another guinea yearly for preaching a sermon on St. Barnabas": and of £12 per annum for the use of the Wisbech Charity School for girls. The rents of the land in Sutton to be distributed amongst "honest necessitous women that have lived in good credit and reputation and attended at church," the remainder to be applied to such charitable uses as the trustees should think fit. By a subsequent order of Court the £12 per annum for the Girls' School was increased to £40 per annum, and a payment of £20 per annum was allowed to the Boys' School, and the distribution of the ultimate balance was left to the Trustees' discretion. It is given to poor men and women indiscriminately. The house forming the endowment of the Boys' School was required for the improvement of the Wisbech river, and sold, the proceeds being invested in the purchase of land in Manea. The income, amounting to about £300

annually, is applied according to the directions given by the founder, as varied by the foregoing order.

ALMSHOUSES IN WISBECH.—Among the charitable gifts none are more highly appreciated by aged and infirm widows than the homes described in Pope's lines—

Behold yon Almshouses, neat but void of state,  
Where age and want sit smiling at the gate.

There are often more candidates for the almshouses than can be at once accommodated, consequently the addition of five as a gift to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Victoria are certain to be appreciated. We may, however, first refer to—

Mrs. Mayer's Asylum, the intended gift of Judith Mayer, of Wisbech, spinster, who by will dated 1811, bequeathed the sum of £500, to erect a building to be used as an asylum, "for the reception of such poor persons at Wisbech as might happen to be afflicted with palsy, rheumatism, gout, blindness, or any other complaint which might render them objects of compassion, and as a lasting remark of her good wishes and regard for the town of Wisbech and its inhabitants." Also the addition of a sum of £1,200 to the Capital Burgesses and to the Vicar and Churchwardens to be invested and the dividends applied to the support and repair of such building, as well as for the use and benefit of the occupants and for the purchase of coals annually. Mrs. Mayer further bequeathed £400, the interest of which was to be distributed in money and coals, for the benefit of such of the poor as the Capital Burgesses and Vicar and Churchwardens should think fit and proper objects to receive the same. The bequests of £500 and £1,200 being void by the Statute of Mortmain, the residuary legatee, Mr. Hugh Jackson (father of the late Mr. W. Goddard Jackson) became entitled to them, and of his own free will generously determined to fulfil her intentions, and did so by building in 1815, five tenements at a cost of £744, and endowing them with a sum of Consols equivalent to £1,200. The bequest of £400 for money and coals was also invested in Consols.

Mrs. Stermyns, by her will, the date of which is unknown gave among other bequests, to the Capital Burgesses £100 for the erection of a market house and chambers over the same, the upper part of which was to be let, and the rent applied to its repair, any surplus to be distributed amongst the Wisbech poor, the lower part being free to all persons to buy and sell their corn

and grain. A building of wood was erected in 1614, and having gone to decay was pulled down in 1786. She also gave £100 for the erection of almshouses in Wisbech, four of which were built on a site near the House of Correction and were inhabited until 1813, when their ruinous condition necessitated their sale. The houses and site realised £340, and six new almshouses, with two apartments, upper and lower, were erected at an expense of £706, by the Capital Burgesses, near the Boys' National Schools. They bear the following inscription:—"These six almshouses were erected by the Burgesses of the Town of Wisbech, A.D., 1813." These are now under the management of the Trustees of the Municipal Charities as before mentioned.

Dr. Hawkins, in 1631, by his will left £300 for erecting almshouses, which were built in a place "near the little river," Wisbech. Owing to their decay, they were pulled down in 1835 and the site and materials sold for £644 10s. There were also six almshouses called King John's, which were very ancient buildings and projected into the public street on the north side of the churchyard, so that it was thought advisable by the Capital Burgesses to add the site of them to the public street. The materials were sold for £45 and the site added to the street. In place of these twelve almshouses, the Corporation erected six double tenements at the entrance to the Church Cemetery at a cost of £916, being £226 more than the old almshouses and the site realized. A stone bears an inscription to the effect that Hawkins' and King John's Almshouses were rebuilt by the Burgesses in 1835. These are also under the management of the Trustees of the Municipal Charities.

On the north side of Love Lane, leading from the Churchyard to Great Church Street, are five small almshouses with iron palisading in front, erected by Joseph Medworth, who purchased the Castle Estate, and built the Crescent. An inscription on the front records their history: "1813, Castle Almshouses for five poor women of good repute and not less than 50 years of age, built and endowed by Joseph Medworth, grandson of Edward Medworth, who in the year 1692, gave a house and land on the South Brink (as by Corporation Records) to the poor of Wisbech for ever." Mr. Medworth appointed the occupants of the house during his lifetime, and conferred the duty on trustees at his decease.

The timely gift of Mr. G. W. Mills, of the Retreat, Downham Market, and the Union Brewery, Wisbech, of five additional almshouses, is intended to commemorate Her Majesty's

Diamond Jubilee, by a worthy and permanent memorial of that event. They are in course of erection on the Lynn Road, next St. Augustine's Schools, in Elizabethan style, somewhat freely treated. The five houses will form a quadrangle with ornamental garden in the centre and be faced with Bawsey bricks, with stone dressings. They are to be substantially built, and conveniently arranged and fitted. The centre block will have an ornamental gable with dedication panel and the following inscription:—"Diamond Jubilee Almshouses, 1897. Built and endowed by George William Mills." Mr. W. H. H. Davis, Professional Associate of the Royal Institute of Surveyors, is the architect, and Messrs. J. Groom and Son, Wisbech, the builders. The donor has undertaken to provide a capital fund to produce a weekly allowance for each of the tenants who may be appointed to occupy them, and to cover the expense of necessary repairs. The almshouses will be vested in trustees appointed by Mr. Mills.

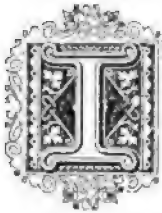
DR. JOBSON'S CHARITIES.—The Rev. Abraham Jobson, D.D., a former vicar of Wisbech, in addition to the benefactions already mentioned gave £1,700 Consols the income of which was to be expended in providing books for the use of poor persons frequenting the parish church and instruction in psalmody, also £1,000 Consols the income of which was to be expended in promoting psalmody in the Chapel of Ease; £400 Consols, the income of which was to be applied in the education of poor children at Sunday Schools to be established at Murrow and Guyhirn, and in the purchase of books for children attending the schools; £400 Consols, the income of which was to be applied in providing bibles and books for poor persons attending the Chapel of Ease.

There are one or two other charities which have not been included in the preceding list which may be briefly described:—Girling's Charity consists of a bequest by Richmond Girling, who in 1658 left 40s. to Wisbech St Peter's parish "within ten years after my decease, and so every ten years; 40s. for ever to be paid to the Churchwardens on the 24th of June, and distributed by them to the poor. Swaine's Charity consists of a sum of £400 Consols, the dividends on which are annually received and distributed by the Churchwardens.

There are many useful philanthropic and thrift-promoting societies which can only be named. The Wisbech Town Dorcas Society has since February, 1817, enabled the poor inhabitants of the town to obtain clothing at a cheaper rate and, assisted by Dr. Jobson's bequest before-mentioned, its beneficent efforts in the

borough have been much appreciated. The Provident Club is on similar lines, and an Association to assist Young and Friendless Girls is doing quiet but excellent work. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children is represented by an active branch in the town, which not only collects funds and distributes literature, but has been the means of bringing to light cases of cruelty in the town and neighbourhood. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has also a branch in Wisbech, and the visits of the Inspector from Cambridge have been of great utility in encouraging the more humane treatment of dumb animals. In winters of exceptional severity, the Wisbech Soup Kitchen dispenses its welcome relief. On the site of an old Baptist Chapel in Place's Yard, a building containing four coppers has been adapted, each copper capable of preparing 80 gallons of soup. This is made under the direction of a committee, and distributed once or twice a week, with bread, as the severity of the winter may require. The funds are provided by subscription lists initiated at public meetings of the inhabitants, convened when required by the Mayor for the time being in office. The last was convened by Mr. A. W. May, when the fund then in hand was supplemented by a collection of £250 in the early part of 1895, during a six weeks' frost of great intensity, to meet the exceptional distress. A considerable part of this was distributed in the shape of coals, daily gifts of bread, and soup twice in the week, but a balance remained in hand sufficient to meet a further distribution in the winter of 1896-7, and there is still a surplus of £135, which will be available to deal promptly with a sudden arrival of inclement weather.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ISLE OF ELY AND ITS GOVERNMENT: POOR LAW  
ADMINISTRATION IN THE WISBECH UNION.

IN a judicial sense Wisbech has been deprived of some of its importance since the beginning of the century. At one time it was an Assize town, the Isle of Ely Assizes being held in the Borough alternately with Ely. The Isle, too, had its own Chief Justice, Edward Christian by name, and in 1804, we are told that he delivered a remarkable charge to the Grand Jury at Wisbech, containing "Some observations on the efficiency of an armed peasantry and the utility of arming the special constables with fire locks, with suggestions for adding immediately to the National Forces 400,000 Independent Fusiliers, without any expense to Government, and with little loss or inconvenience to individuals." Although this charge was printed and circulated, the proposed conscription does not seem to have found favour, and we are told that the Chief Justice died in 1823 "in the full vigour of his incapacity." Chief Justice Christian was best known as the editor of Blackstone's Commentaries, and was a distant cousin of Law, the first Earl of Ellenborough, who on one occasion remarked on a ruling of his relative "that Christian was only fit to rule a copy book," a satire which acquired increased point through the fact that he had once been under-master at Hawkshead School. The trials of the bread rioters at Ely and Littleport in May, 1816, took place at a special assize at Ely before Chief Justice Christian, with whom

Judges Abbott and Burrough were associated, sentence of death being passed upon some of the prisoners. "The charge and solemn address of Mr. Justice Abbott" was afterwards published. Succeeding Chief Justice Christian was Chief Justice Storks, who when he came to Wisbech was received with Assize honours by the Chief Bailiff of that day, and was accompanied by a smart equipage and trumpeters. It is said that he used to be lodged by the Master of the Grammar School, who received eight guineas for entertaining him. He was appointed about 1818, and had the same authority as the twelve judges of the land. He sentenced several persons to death, some of whom suffered the penalty of the law a little below Horse Shoe Corner, where the gallows were on the marsh. Mr. R. B. Dawbarn, in the lectures on "Wisbech in the Days of our Grandfathers," which are reproduced in this volume, remarks that melancholy processions were wont to set out after the Assizes from the Gaol, near the Sessions House, convicts being taken in a cart, seated on their own coffins, to the gallows erected at the Horse Shoe corner of the river, with all the town following. The body of the prisoner was sometimes gibbeted. Charles Kingsley, in *Alton Locke*, refers to an execution that took place at Wisbech. Farmer Porter, describing two Irish reapers who murdered a wise woman for her money, says:—

They never got nothing but fourteen shillings and a crooked sixpence; and I see um both a hanging in chains by Wisbech river, a little above Guyhirne, with my own eyes. So when they Irish reapers come into the Vens, our chaps always say, 'You go to Guy Hall, theae's yor brethren a-waiting for yer; and that do make um joost mad loike, it do.'

There is rather a grim skull story attaching to the same gibbet, near Wisbech. One winter's night the frequenters of an inn called the Wheatsheaf (now the Royal Hotel) at Wisbech, were enjoying their pipes, while stories were being told of men who had been found guilty of murder recently, and gibbeted about two miles away. An attempt was made to wager that one of the company dare not visit the common and climb the gibbet-post, but no one was bold enough to accept it. At last a wager was made that one Wilkins dare not at the midnight hour visit the churchyard near at hand, climbing over a hoarding at the darkest corner of the church (which corner had been used by the sexton as a receptacle for bones that were unearthed) and bring a skull back. Wilkins started at midnight, one of the company having been secretly sent on first to hide himself near the specified spot. Wilkins climbed the hoarding, picked up a skull, and was about



to return, when a sepulchral voice said, "That's mine!" Wilkins immediately dropped the skull and seized another, when the same voice repeated the hoarse exclamation, "That's mine!" Wilkins' courage was, however, quite equal to the occasion, and he replied, "That it is not. You ain't got two skulls, anyhow!" and returned in triumph, winning the wager.

In 1836, the separate Assize jurisdiction was abolished, and the office of Chief Justice of the Isle ceased to exist, Mr. Sergeant Storks, as he was afterwards called, becoming Judge of Shoreditch County Court, and living to a great age, his death taking place in 1866. It was a standing joke in the Isle of Ely that the post-boys addressed Chief Justice Storks as "My Lord" within the borders of the Isle, but directly the boundary was crossed, they at once changed the mode of address to "Sir." Mr. Thos. A. Hills, Crier of the Isle of Ely Quarter Sessions Court, was a witness in a case tried at the last Assizes held at Wisbech in 1836, before the Chief Justice Storks. Mr. Hills, whose characteristic "Oyez" (hear ye) repeated three times before the proclamation against Vice and Immorality is read, is familiar to frequenters of the court, has exercised the duties of crier at Ely since 1835, when he succeeded his father in the post. Mr. Wilson was appointed crier at Wisbech on the same day and Mr. Hills succeeded him in the office in 1868, having thus served 62 years at Ely, and 29 at Wisbech.

An attempt was made to revive a Central Assize at Wisbech, and in 1848, at the Quarter Sessions, the Grand Jury at Wisbech, of which Mr. George Cottam was foreman, following the lead given in the charge of the Chairman (the Rev. H. Fardell) made a presentment in favour of a Central Assize at Wisbech, with jurisdiction over the Isle of Ely, Marshland, and part of Lincolnshire, the Rev. H. Fardell subsequently issuing a pamphlet in support of a similar idea. It was received with considerable disfavour, and at the suggestion of his brother, Dr. Fardell, the Chairman ultimately withdrew his proposal. Sentences of transportation were comparatively frequent at this time. One man was charged with attempting to kill his wife, and was chased over the fields and captured by the Rev. Henry Jackson, who handed him over to the constable, and he was sentenced to 15 years' transportation, a similar sentence being passed upon a labourer for poisoning a farmer's horses. Another prisoner, whose grandfather had been High Sheriff of the County, received ten years' transportation for forging a cheque for £283 upon Messrs. Gurney and Co.'s bank.

The old Shire Hall in the Market Place was pulled down in

1810, and of it an illustration is given earlier in this volume. The pillory and stocks were at that time removed to the Gaol adjoining the building in which the Isle of Ely Quarter Sessions are now held and known as the Sessions House, South Brink. This was erected as a Shire Hall in 1807, next to the New Gaol or House of Correction as it was called, which stood where the timber yard of Mr. Whitehead now is. Here there was a treadmill for grinding corn as a correction or punishment for the criminal prisoners, also a grain store, bake house, and chapel, with a chaplain who received £50 a year. The Gaol was upon the site of an old one, which was used not only for malefactors, but also for some of the French war prisoners, until June, 1814. When the first peace was proclaimed, they were sent back to France by sailing vessels from the Port of Wisbech, together with a large number from the barracks at Norman Cross (a few miles south-west of Peterborough) who were brought to Wisbech in lighters for shipment in these vessels. During their incarceration in the prison at Wisbech, some of those in the cells, now existing under the Sessions House, used to communicate through the grated windows with people passing along the street, to whom they sold ingenious toys and fancy articles made of bones, straw, reed, &c., and in other cases kind-hearted ladies, notably Mrs. Jackson, the wife of the Rev. Jeremiah Jackson, Master of the Grammar School and Chaplain of the Gaol (father of the Rev. F. Jackson, of Parson Drove, and of Mr. Francis Jackson, the late Town Clerk) used to sell their articles for them to the charitably disposed. The Irishmen convicted of the Wisbech Fen murder were gibbeted in irons on certain posts erected on the Wash, a little above Guyhirn, as a warning to those who contemplated similar evil doings, carnivorous birds often preying upon the bodies. Sheep stealing, horse stealing, and other offences were in those days subject to death by hanging (for instance, Coleback and Garner executed at Wisbech in 1819 for highway robbery) and such was the morbid state of the public mind that "last dying speeches and confessions" were printed and sold even before the execution took place. Notably, this was the case with the last man who was condemned at Wisbech about 1830, but was never hanged, his respite arriving only on the Friday, and he was to have been executed on the Saturday. Large numbers of country people assembled at the Horse Shoe corner on Saturday morning in the expectation of witnessing it, but dispersed as soon as his reprieve became known. Nevertheless, the man's reputed confession was sold in Tydd St. Mary, where he had lived,

and one of the residents remembers warning the vendor that he must avoid a certain lane where the condemned man's mother lived, lest she should hear him offering it for sale. The convicted man received a pardon, and lived in his own village until his death a few years back. In September, 1855, when the Governor's house, attached to the Sessions House, was sold to Mr. George Hiscox for £550, the gallows, pillory, treadmill, and prison van were disposed of by public auction. The treadmill and grinding machinery fetched only £22, which was thought to be a great bargain for the purchaser.

The reason of their sale will be understood, when it is stated that in 1846, a new prison, having 43 cells, had been built upon the plan of the model prison at Pentonville, in Victoria Road, New Wisbech, from designs by Mr. George Bassevi, and carried out by Mr. Thos. Jackson, the contractor. At that time the Isle magistrates met at the prison to hold their courts, and this continued until the removal in October, 1855, to the Sessions House. The diminution of crime in the Isle of Ely led to the closing of this prison, and from that time the prisoners were sent to Cambridge Gaol. It was subsequently sold by the Crown to Mr. Henry Farrow, who has pulled the prison down and converted the Governor's house into a private residence. Notwithstanding the strength of the prison, and the high walls surrounding it, one or two daring escapes were made from it. A notable attempt was that of a man, who, wrenching a piece of iron from the window frame, cleverly excavated and pierced a hole in the thick wall, large enough to allow his body to pass through, and letting himself to the ground with the sheets from his bed knotted together. In his descent, he caught his foot against the window of a lower cell, and the prisoner in it giving the alarm, he had no time to scale the outer wall, but took refuge in a house, used for storage purposes, where he was re-captured. The daring attempt was reported in the local papers at the time which quoted the lines of Lovelace—

Stone walls do not a prison make  
Nor iron bars a cage.

Following the abolition of the Assizes at Wisbech, and of the office of Chief Justice of the Isle, the Rev. H. Fardell, Vicar of Wisbech, presided over the criminal and civil business of the Quarter Sessions for many years (alternately with the Rev. W. Gale Townley, Rector of Upwell) until the former's death in 1854, and it is a singular coincidence that after the lapse of half-a-

century, his son now occupies the post formerly held by his father. Mr. Townley, who lived at Beaupré Hall, resigned the Chairmanship in 1858 on account of ill-health, and the late Mr. John Richardson Fryer succeeded to that responsible post, which he fulfilled with ability and impartiality for the long period of 35 years, having acted as a Justice of the Peace for 52 years. In delivering his first charge to the Grand Jury at Wisbech, Mr. Fryer mentioned that the Rev. Algernon Peyton, Rector of Doddington (a living which was then of the value of £10,000 per annum and the richest benefice in the country) had been invited to accept the appointment, but he pleaded his seventy-two years as a reason for not undertaking its responsibilities. Mr. Fryer retired in January, 1893, amidst the compliments of the Bench and the Bar, and was succeeded by Mr. Thomas G. Fardell, M.P., Barrister-at-Law, of the Norfolk Circuit and son of a former Chairman. Mr. Fardell has been twice elected the Parliamentary representative for South Paddington, London, the first time on the decease of Lord Randolph Churchill. He was a member of the old Metropolitan Board of Works, and when it was superseded by the London County Council, was not only chosen one of its members, but for a time fulfilled the duties of Chairman of the Council Theatres Committee. In 1897 he was knighted by Her Majesty on the occasion of the celebration of her Diamond Jubilee. Sir George Fardell's father (whose bust is in the reading room of the Wisbech Working Men's Institute) was one of the Stewards at the Coronation Dinner on Wisbech Market Place, and upon the completion of the longest reign in British history by Her Majesty, his son was the recipient of one of the honours conferred.

The office of Clerk of the Peace has changed only four times during the last 50 years. Mr. Charles Metcalfe, of Inglethorpe Hall, succeeded Mr. Hugh Jackson, of Duddington and Wisbech, father of the late Mr. W. Goddard Jackson, who died on February 11th, 1852. Mr. Charles Metcalfe was chosen a few days after, by the Duke of Bedford, the Custos Rotulorum at that time, to succeed Mr. Jackson. Mr. Metcalfe's son, Mr. Frederic Morehouse Metcalfe, received the appointment on the resignation of his father, and held it until December, 1893, when after 41 years, it reverted to the Jackson family, Mr. Edwd. Hugh Jackson having been appointed by the Isle of Ely County Council to the offices of Clerk of the Peace and Clerk of the County Council. Mr. F. M. Metcalfe, who was Clerk of the Peace when the Isle of Ely County Council was formed, was the first Clerk

to the County Council, and upon him fell the onerous task of directing the formation and initiating the work of this important body. It may also be mentioned that the oldest Magistrates' Clerk in the Isle of Ely was Mr. Francis Jackson, who held the office of Clerk to the Wisbech Justices for the long period of 58 years, having commenced his duties on the 4th of November, 1837. Mr. Jackson was recently presented with his portrait by the Wisbech Justices, as a recognition of his long and valued services, and in accepting it with the suggestion that it should be hung in the Justices' private room, Mr. Jackson remarked that there was not a single person then living who was connected with that Bench when he became Clerk. Mr. Jackson has also held the office of Clerk to the Borough Magistrates for over fifty years, having been appointed to succeed Mr. Berridge Smith on November 1st, 1845. Such a long record of service is undoubtedly a very unusual one. The impartiality and courtesy shown by him in the discharge of his duties is generally recognised.

An important change in County administration was effected by the passage of the Local Government Act of 1888, establishing representative County Councils. Some four years before—in December, 1884, Major Tulloch had held an inquiry, on behalf of the Government, at Cambridge, with a view to reporting to the Boundaries Commission as to the limits of the proposed Parliamentary Divisions of Cambridgeshire, under the Redistribution Scheme. His report resulted in the Northern or Wisbech Division of Cambridgeshire being constituted one of the three separate divisions of that County, with Wisbech as the place of election. Although the larger portion of the Isle of Ely is included in the Wisbech Division, the boundaries of the Isle of Ely and the Wisbech Division are not coterminous. But in 1888, the Bill introduced by the Government for the creation of a new system of County Government raised an important question. The Isle of Ely had always been regarded as possessing a separate and distinct jurisdiction from that of Cambridgeshire, in which county it is situated. The Isle has its own Custos Rotulorum (Lord de Ramsey) who recommends the appointment of Justices, and, as we have already shown, its civil and criminal business have been, for a long period, dispatched in its own Quarter Sessions. Consequently in April, 1888, the Isle Magistrates, at Quarter Sessions, expressed the desire that the ancient jurisdiction of the Isle should be retained, and a committee was appointed to obtain an alteration in the provisions of the Bill, to enable this to be done. The Clerk of the Peace (Mr. Frederic Morehouse Metcalfe)

worked with so much energy, that assisted by the Parliamentary representatives for Cambridgeshire, a special clause was introduced into the Local Government Bill giving the Isle of Ely all the privileges of a distinct County, having its Council and officers. The elections took place on the 15th of January, 1889, and the Provisional Council met on the 23rd of that month to choose its aldermen. The supplemental elections to supply the seats of those members who were appointed aldermen having taken place, the Provisional Council met on the 20th of February and elected Mr. Oliver Claude Pell, J.P., as the first Chairman, with Mr. William Cutlack Little, J.P., as Vice-Chairman. The last meeting of the Justices for the transaction of civil business was held on February 15th and at that meeting, the names of thirteen Justices were appointed to act with thirteen County Councillors as the Standing Joint Committee, principally charged with matters relating to the control of the Isle of Ely police force. Mr. Little presented a statement showing the receipts and expenditure of that Court for the preceding twenty years, which bore testimony to the careful and able administration of the Justices during that period. On the death of Mr. O. C. Pell on October 17th, 1891, Mr. W. C. Little, the Vice-Chairman, succeeded to the Presidency of the Council, and Mr. Joseph Martin was chosen Vice-Chairman. The new system of Local Government thus initiated has been further developed, and in December, 1894, District and Parish Councils were elected in place of the Sanitary Authorities and Vestries, which had administered local affairs until that time. The County Council rate for the year ending 31st March, 1898, was 9½d. in the £, and the proportion contributed by Wisbech is £1,372. An important matter in relation to the County Councils is that of the management of main roads, and the question whether the result of taking the roads over has been satisfactory or otherwise in respect of efficiency of management and cost has been replied to by Mr. W. C. Little, Chairman of the Isle of Ely County Council in a memorandum addressed to a public journal. Mr. Little writes:—

In my opinion the result has been satisfactory. The cost has probably increased, but the management is much more efficient. It is rather difficult to compare the present cost with that under parochial authorities as the mileage of main roads has been considerably increased, and the average cost per mile is not a true criterion. It may however, be assumed that there is an increase in cost occasioned by the use of a better class of material and a general improvement of the roads. All the materials have to be imported, the whole area of the County not yielding a single ton of material fit for use on a main

Mr. W. Tallack's interesting book, *George Fox, the Friends, and the Early Baptists*, he shows that Fox, finding himself in substantial agreement with the latter, extensively accepted their principles. Both of the divisions of the Baptists had anticipated most of the doctrines and also the system of discipline adopted by George Fox and the Friends, but it was the General Baptists, who were a distinct body as early as 1608, that most fully arrived at the views and usages which have been subsequently attributed to Quaker origin. The General Baptists had, for example, already entertained scruples in respect to the use of the Pagan names of the months and the days, the unlawfulness of oaths, &c. So it was in no degree surprising that the Baptists should, as Mr. Tallack says, join the ranks of the Friends "in shoals." But it would seem that the latter have adhered far more firmly to their early principles than the former. When the Baptists first erected their Meeting House, persecution was rife, and it is affirmed that one, Mrs. Grant, was burned alive for sheltering these "heretics" as they were denominated. The Rev. J. Jarrom was for 36 years Pastor of the General Baptist Church, worshipping in Ely Place, the Chapel having been erected in the second year of his pastorate. In 1813, Mr. Jarrom was appointed Theological and Classical Tutor of an Academy which was transferred from London to Wisbech. The Church was very active during this period, and among its more prominent supporters during this and subsequent pastorates was Mr. Robert Wherry, who was four times Mayor of the Borough, and in earlier days helped to fight the battle of the Church Rates.

The new Baptist Chapel in Ely Place was erected during the pastorate of the Rev. W. E. Winks, Ald. Wherry, Mr. F. C. Southwell, Mr. Gromitt, and other prominent supporters who are deceased, assisting in the undertaking. It was built on the site of the old Chapel, and other property purchased for the purpose, the whole cost, including a lofty spire and large school-room, being nearly £5,000. Mr. H. Pooley was the architect, and Mr. Chapman was the contractor. The top-stone of the spire was laid on September 2nd, 1872, and the building was opened on March 20th, 1873 (the decease of Ald. Wherry having taken place about a month previously), by the Rev. Charles Vince, of Birmingham, who preached morning and afternoon, Mr. Henry Goodman, of St. Ives, presiding at the evening meeting. The building is commodious and conveniently arranged, and a centre of useful work. Many will recall, among memorable gatherings held within its walls, the great Missionary Meeting

which took place some years since in connection with the General Baptist Conference, under the presidency of Sir George Campbell, when Father Grassi and the Rev. J. Wall, from Rome, addressed a crowded audience.

The Rev. W. E. Winks, now Pastor of a Cardiff Baptist Church, and author of several religious and popular works, was for several years Pastor of this Church, and his services were handsomely acknowledged when he resigned. The Rev. A. G. Everitt, who came from Dorking, is the present Minister, and has acceptably discharged the duties of the pastorate for several years past, having succeeded the Rev. J. Bentley. An illustration of the exterior of this building will be found in this volume.

#### THE HILL STREET BAPTIST CHURCH.

With respect to the Particular Baptist body we have already seen that land in Deadman's Lane was purchased for a Chapel in 1692; and the *Congregational Magazine* for 1820 says that the name of Wm. Rix occurs in connection with the cause at that time, as well as earlier, as a pastor or leader. He was known to be resident here as late as 1715. No records of his successor exist until 1781, when Mr. Samuel Fisher commenced his ministry which lasted until his death in 1803. From traditions which have been preserved, it appears that he was a man of remarkable gifts, scholarly, and singularly eloquent, moving, it is said, his congregation, at times, even to tears. Several of his sermons were printed, and one on "The Duty of Subjects to the Civil Magistrates," preached in Ship Lane (Upper Hill Street) Chapel, February 28th, 1794, on a day appointed as a General Fast attracted widespread attention. It was during the height of the French Revolution when sedition and anarchy seemed brewing in England, as well as in the various countries of Europe. Mr. Fisher received special thanks for this discourse from William Pitt, the Prime Minister. A new Chapel was built by the Particular Baptists about 1792 in Upper Hill Street, on their departure from the meeting house in Deadman's Lane. This was pulled down in 1858 and with the addition of two cottages to the site, a new chapel in early English style was erected from the designs of Mr. R. B. Dawbarn, at a cost of some £4,000. It is the only edifice in the town, besides the old Parish Church, wholly constructed of stone, some of the large blocks from the old Bridge and the Butter Cross being used, as well as new stone from the Ketton quarries for doorways, windows, &c. The building was opened for public service on May 8th, 1859. Since



constitution in 1835 was the Rev. H. Fardell, the Vicar, who issued a short statement as to the Workhouse, its rules and government, addressed to his parishioners. In 1837 and 1839, he also published the speeches which he made at a dinner given to him by the Guardians as their chairman, and statistical tables relating to the expenditure. Mr. Fardell died in March, 1854, and was succeeded in the chair by Mr. Thos. Dawbarn, who took a very active interest in his duties, issuing during his term of office a pamphlet giving the comparative cost of maintenance of the inmates of Wisbech and neighbouring unions. A singular incident occurred during the time he occupied the chair. In August, 1854, the clock tower of Lynn Workhouse, which was 80 feet in height fell, killing two persons and injuring others, the inmates being removed to the Old Museum. An application made to the Wisbech Board of Guardians to receive 68 inmates was refused owing to sanitary difficulties. In 1856, the Rev. W. B. Hopkins, the new Vicar, was elected a Guardian and was proposed as chairman. Mr. R. Wherry was also nominated, but as the latter wished to withdraw, Mr. Hopkins was chosen. A vote of thanks was at the same time passed to Mr. Thos. Dawbarn for his services. In 1861, the Poor Law Inspector commented upon the excessive amount of pauperism in Wisbech Union, the expenditure for the March quarter being £3,462, or £800 more than in the corresponding quarter of 1859. A discussion took place as to enlarging the Workhouse at a cost of £381, but nothing was decided. On resigning the chairmanship of the Board, after ten years' occupancy, Canon Hopkins was presented by the Guardians with a silver claret jug, in October, 1886, and Mr. Wm. Davis Dieppe was elected to succeed him. During Mr. Hopkins' chairmanship the question of appointing a paid chaplain was proposed again and again, but every time defeated, the Nonconformists urging that voluntary services were always available. The Rev. G. Thompson, who had acted as voluntary chaplain for many years, was presented with a cake basket and purse of ninety sovereigns raised by subscription, in acknowledgment of the services he had rendered. Mr. Dieppe resigned the chairmanship in 1873, and Mr. John Gardiner was elected, continuing to hold that office until his death in 1883. Mr. R. Wiles was appointed to succeed him but declined to act, and Mr. W. B. Parsons was elected and held the office until 1866, when he lost his election as a Guardian, and the Rev. J. Young, who still holds the office, was chosen. Mr. Young has proved an excellent chairman, whose familiarity with the working of the

Poor Law has been of great value in saving the pockets of the ratepayers, and discriminating between the deserving poor and those who are improvident and idle. The Boards of Guardians, who have been from time to time elected, have sought to administer the Poor Law with justice, tempered with mercy, extending aid to the necessitous poor, and at the same time mindful of the pockets of the ratepayers. In the future there are indications that a greater discrimination will be required between the aged or deserving poor, and the professional vagrant who lives on the credulity of his fellow men. With separate homes outside the House for the children, whose presence in a workhouse ought not to be permitted, accommodation for those aged couples, who are driven into the House by stress of circumstances, and measures for suppressing vagrancy, the decrease of pauperism may be more marked, and the recent efforts of the Local Government Board indicate an intention to recommend the exercise of more liberal Workhouse treatment in the case of the deserving poor than has hitherto been the case.

In September, 1862, under the Union Assessment Act, an Assessment Committee of twelve was elected, and a few days later a Vestry meeting was held to select a Committee to assist the Overseers in making the new Valuation List, but it was ultimately decided not to interfere with the assessment of Wisbech. Messrs. Tucker and Stanley were later employed to make the requisite valuation of the parish. Within the last few months the question of a re-valuation of the Wisbech Union has occupied the attention of the Assessment Committee, and it has now been decided to make inquiries as to the costs likely to attend such a step. The last valuation was in 1868, and cost between £3,000 and £4,000, although the whole of the Union was not undertaken at that time. Owing to agricultural depression, the Assessment Committee adopted a resolution by which 15 per cent. is now deducted from the assessments of agricultural land, although the legality of this procedure is questioned, the contention being that each assessment ought to be dealt separately on its own comparative valuation. The Agricultural Rating Act passed in 1896, also relieved occupiers of land and market gardeners of half their rates. The following figures will show approximately the present assessment of the Union:—Total value, £152,037 divided as follows—Marshland Parishes: Lands, £70,780; houses and buildings, &c., £31,784; total £102,564; assessable value, £67,174. Wisbech Parishes: Lands, £59,958; houses, £54,884; total, £114,842; assessable value, £84,863.

allowing for a deduction of half the rates on land, a rate of a penny in the £ produces about £633, as compared with £905 before the Agricultural Rating Act, the difference between these amounts being payable by Government from the Consolidated Fund.

Under the District and Parish Councils' Act, the Rural Sanitary Authority composed of the representatives of the country parishes are now resolved into two District Councils. The Marshland District Council has twenty members, and has elected Mr. J. Newcome Wright as its chairman, whilst the Wisbech District Council has chosen Mr. Henry Sharpe, both the chairmen of these bodies being Justices of the Peace for the County in which they sit, by virtue of their appointment, a distinction which Mr. Sharpe held before his election to the office. These bodies undertake highway management, sanitary inspection, water supply, or other matters affecting the welfare of the districts over which they possess authority, and jointly with other local authorities have a voice in the management of the Fever Hospital.

The clerkship of the Guardians was at one time held by Mr. W. Goddard Jackson, and on his resignation Mr. G. D. Collins, his partner, fulfilled the duties for many years, until his nephew, Mr. Jas. D. Collins succeeded him. On Mr. J. D. Collins leaving Wisbech, Mr. George Carrick was elected, and has not only discharged these duties but those of Clerk to the Assessment Committee and the Rural Sanitary Authority, also acting in a similar relation to the new District Councils which have come into existence this year.

## CHAPTER XIX.

ROYAL VISITS, JUBILEE AND DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS.

BRITISH ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S CONGRESS.



IN the history of most municipal boroughs the visits of Royal and distinguished personages, or the celebration of National events, occupy an important place in local records. Among reigning potentates, William the Conqueror is supposed to have built Wisbech Castle and probably visited the town. King John stayed for a night there; Edward IV, when on a pilgrimage to Bury St. Edmunds, returned *via* Lynn and Wisbech, with a suite of 200 horsemen *en route* for Crowland; Charles I was probably at Wisbech on his way from Oxford to the army at Newark, Lord Clarendon observing that he went by many "crooked and bye ways" to escape the forces of the Parliament; whilst in an earlier chapter a letter from Oliver Cromwell is quoted, dated from Wisbech Castle. In more recent times, the present Sovereign paid her first and only visit to the Borough, less than two years before her accession to the Throne. This was on the 22nd of September, 1835, her Majesty who was not then quite seventeen years of age, being, at that time, known as the Princess Victoria. The visit took place in company with the Duchess of Kent, her mother, on her journey by road from Burleigh House, Stamford, the Marquis of Exeter's seat, to visit Holkham Hall, the Earl of Leicester's Norfolk residence. The Corporation of Wisbech intimated their desire to present the Princess with an address, but as it was a rule that in merely

passing through a town such a compliment should not be offered, the Royal visitors consented instead to receive from the Municipality a copy of Col. Watson's *History of Wisbech*, which was presented by the Town Bailiff of that year, Mr. Henry Leach. The following is a copy of the order of procession observed, taken from an original programme in the possession of Mr. H. Briggs, Timber Market.

### TOWN OF WISBECH.

---

The following Order is to be observed on escorting  
Their Royal Highnesses

THE DUCHESS OF KENT

AND THE

PRINCESS VICTORIA

THROUGH THE TOWN ON TUESDAY, THE 22ND INSTANT.

---

On leaving the Town Hall, to meet Their Royal Highnesses.

TWO TRUMPETERS, ON HORSEBACK.

THE ROYAL STANDARD.

THE BAND.

THE MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATION,

AND

GENTLEMEN OF THE TOWN, FOUR ABREAST.

---

On meeting Their Royal Highnesses at Barton Lane,

THREE CHEERS WILL BE GIVEN.

TWO TRUMPETERS.

THE ROYAL STANDARD.

GENTLEMEN OF THE TOWN, FOUR ABREAST.

THE BAND.

MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATION.

THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES' CARRIAGE.

---

The procession will stop near the Bridge while changing horses, and on reaching the Canal Sluice, Three Cheers will be given, the Band will play the National Anthem, and the Company disperse.

HENRY LEACH,

22nd September, 1835.

Town Bailiff.

A lady who well remembers the Princess's visit to Wisbech, and witnessed it from the old Post Office, over the Bridge, states that the Corporation went in carriages to meet the Princess, and the Duchess of Kent, with their suite, on the Barton or Peterborough Road, and formed a procession, which came along the North Brink. The Princess's closed carriage was drawn by four horses, ridden by postilions, and the youthful face of England's future Queen, who was attired in a pink drawn bonnet, appeared through the open window bowing pleasantly in acknowledgment of the cheering which greeted her. There were two other carriages containing the suite, who seemed somewhat wearied with their long journey, the day being hot and oppressive. Their passage through the town took place about three o'clock in the afternoon, and it was remarked that as the tide was very low and a great deal of mud was visible, the Royal party did not see the river Nene under favourable conditions. When the carriages reached the White Hart Hotel, or the Town Hall, a stoppage was made, and the presentation of the *History of Wisbech* took place by the Town Bailiff. So great was the pressure of the crowd at this point that the railings by the river-side gave way, and some of the people rolled down the bank into the mud, causing a momentary alarm, but beyond an unpleasant bemiring of their clothes, no one suffered any injury. The heavy lumbering carriages of those days afterwards went slowly over the Stone Bridge, past the Butter Cross, through High Street to the Rose and Crown Hotel, where a brief halt was made, before the journey to King's Lynn was resumed. Mr. Richard R. Holmes, of the Library at Windsor Castle, informs us that the copy of Watson's *History of Wisbech*, presented in 1835 to the Princess Victoria is still preserved in the Royal Library. It is printed on pink paper and is handsomely bound in red morocco, with gold tooling in the taste of the time. The inscription it contains is neatly written, the signature only being in the Town Bailiff's writing and is as follows:—

Presented to  
H.R.H. THE PRINCESS VICTORIA  
By the  
CORPORATION OF WISBECH.

22ND SEPTEMBER, 1835.

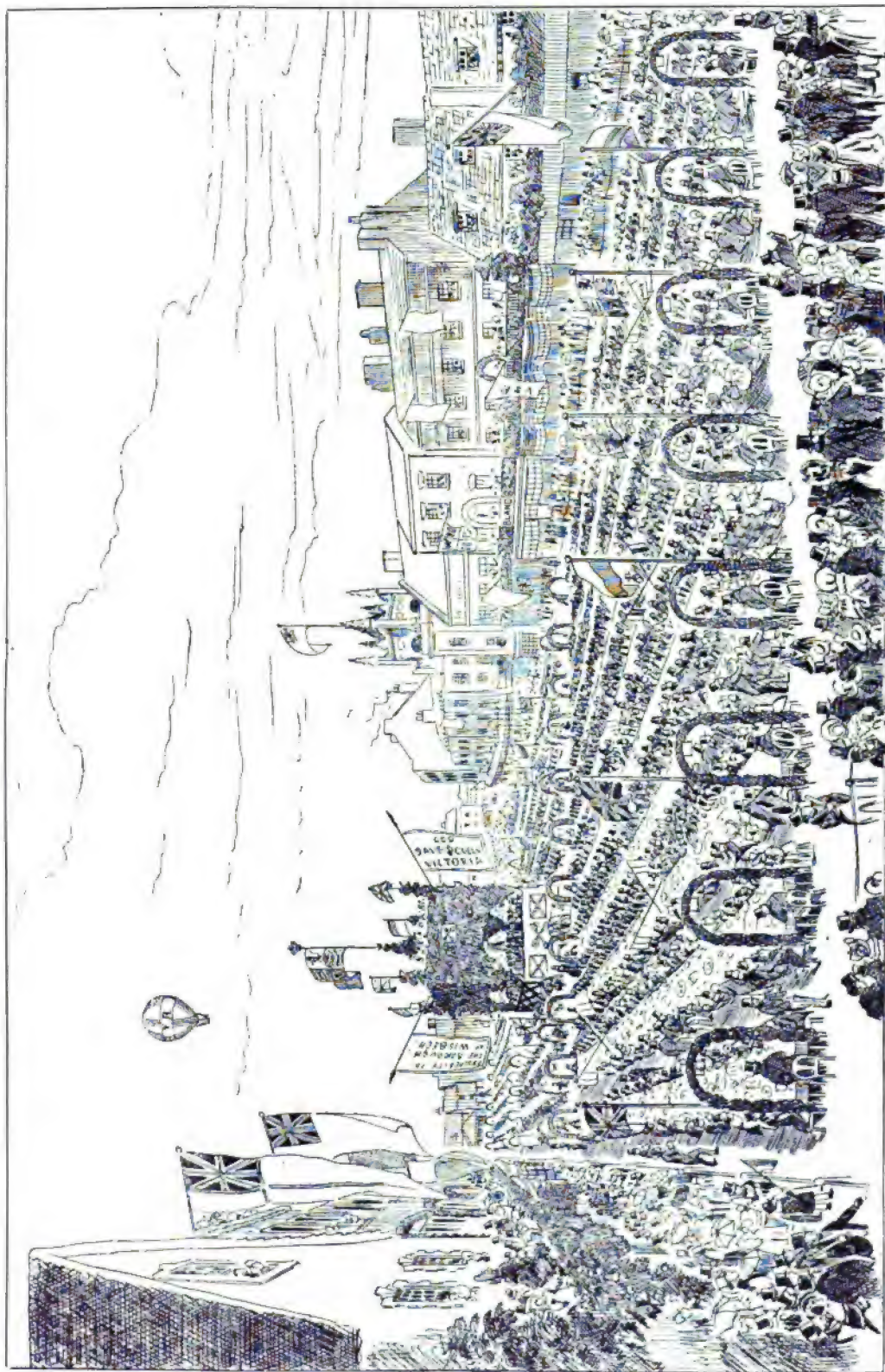
HENRY LEACH,  
Town Bailiff.

Mr. John Cordy Jeaffreson in his work entitled, *Victoria, Queen and Empress*, writes:—

The year of the Princess Victoria's confirmation, August 30th, 1835, was also the year in which she paid her first visit to East Anglia. The autobiographer (Lord Albemarle) whom he quotes, was at Holkham when the Duchess of Kent and the heiress apparent were entertained at the home of the Norfolk Cokes, by his sister, Lady Ann Coke and her husband, Mr. Coke. Speaking of the demeanour of his sister's Royal guests, Lord Albemarle says in his personal reminiscences, "Both were most affable. The youthful Princess, in particular, showed in her demeanour the winning courtesy with which millions of her subjects have since become familiar. In the successive 'progresses' about which the poor old King (William IV) used to speak so testily, the Princess had been brought face to face with her future subjects, and the young lady who had been trained from early childhood to win the approval of strangers knew how to charm people with a glance. At King's Lynn, where the work of making the Eastern Counties Railway was in progress, the townsmen and the railway navvies were so delighted by the Princess's pretty gestures and simple show of gratitude for their acclamations, that they were moved to take the horses from the carriages and draw it with ropes through and beyond the Royal borough. To the Princess, the cheers of the navvies and East Anglian peasants were agreeable, but had the cordial reception come to the King's ears from West Norfolk it would have been far from pleasant to his Majesty, who would have learned from it how longingly the least exalted and most laborious of his subjects were looking beyond his life to the brighter times of a reign that would be more creditable to monarchical government, and more conducive to the happiness of the nation than any previous reign." It may be interesting to note that at Burleigh House, where great preparations were made, Mr. Greville records that all passed off well at the official dinner, except that a pail of ice was accidentally landed by a waiter in the Duchess of Kent's lap, which "made a great bustle," and the Princess Victoria could not help laughing heartily at her mother's dilemma and the untoward *contretemps*.

Coronation festivals, and similar national events have on several occasions been commemorated by public dinners on the Market Hill. On August 4th, 1814, a festival in celebration of "the Happy Return of Peace" was celebrated by a dinner on the Market Place, in which year the Rev. J. Jackson was Town Bailiff. The toasts included: the King; the Prince Regent; the Navy and Army; Prosperity to Wisbech; the Duke of Wellington; and "Peace and Plenty for Ever." In 1821, the coronation of George IV was thus celebrated.\* On the 7th of February, 1820, the proclamation of the King had been made with due

\* Of which a detailed account is given in Watson's *History of Wisbech*.



DINNER ON WISBECH MARKET PLACE TO CELEBRATE CORONATION OF QUEEN VICTORIA, JUNE 28TH, 1837. 5,000 PERSONS REGALED.

*Drawn on the Spot by James Pottory Hunter*



THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

ceremonial, as will be judged from the following account, from a memorandum and placard which were in the possession of the late Mr. H. A. Ward, of Wisbech:—

It is supposed that not less than from 10,000 to 12,000 persons were at Wisbech to witness the loyal manner in which the proclamation was conducted. The ladies and gentlemen of the Corporation and friends, were provided at the New Town Hall with cakes and wine. The Capital Burgesses, Magistrates, Deputy-Lieutenants, Clergy, and gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood of Wisbech assembled at one o'clock at noon to meet the Sheriff, "to publish and proclaim the High and Mighty Prince George the Fourth the lawful and rightful King of these Realms and all the Dominions thereunto belonging." Order of procession: Two Trumpeters on horseback. Chief Constable (Mr. Wm. Squire) mounted with white wand. Lieut.-Col. Watson, of the Local Militia, Captains T. West, W. Swansborough, Nicholas Taylor, and Jas. Usill, and Surgeons Jos. Johnson and Wm. Whitby, on foot, the Junior Ensigns carrying the colours of the Regiment. The Band: Sheriff's Officer with the Corporation Beadles, carrying white wand; the Clergy, robed, viz.: Dr. Jobson, Revs. W. Hardwick, J. R. King; Timothy Matthews, J. R. Christopher, and T. P. Holmes. The Deputy-Sheriff (Mr. William Isaacson), Town Bailiff (Mr. Robert Hardwicke), Clerk of the Peace (Mr. Steed Girdlestone), with Messrs. J. Edes, H. J. Nicholls, and Rev. J. Jackson, Capt. Swaine, of the Navy, Messrs. W. Rayner, E. Ward, John Marshall, ex-High-Sheriff, Deputy-Lieut. J. Sculthorpe, and 100 gentlemen of the town and district, who joined the procession on horseback with many thousand persons on foot. The Deputy-Sheriff was met on the South Brink and proceeded to the Sessions House, where the proclamation was read in Court and afterwards from the steps of the building to the populace. The procession then moved to the Market Place where it was again read, and "God Save the King" sung by 150 children. In the evening, forty-eight gentlemen dined with the Under-Sheriff at the Rose and Crown Hotel, eight barrels of beer were given away to the populace on the Market Hill, and the children of the Girls' and Boys' Charity School were regaled with cake and wine or ale, the girls assembling in the large room over the Corn Exchange.

The Coronation Festival of William IV, in 1831, was similar in its arrangements to that of George IV, but torrents of rain fell when dinner should have commenced. Carvers sat under umbrellas, while the guests crept beneath the tables for shelter. Many dishes never arrived at their destination, and the contents of those that did, disappeared into aprons, baskets and pockets of the hungry and expectant participants.

What is now called "Queen's weather" contributed to the success of the Coronation Festival of Queen Victoria, on June 28th, 1838, when nearly 5,000 persons were regaled on the Market Place, at a cost of about £408. From a manuscript

record of the proceedings kept by Mr. G. A. Ward, Chairman of the Ticket Committee, some interesting particulars are obtained. Mr. Thos. Dawbarn, Mayor, was Chairman of the General Committee, and the Stewards were:—Rev. Henry Fardell, M.A., vicar; Admiral Spelman Swaine, R.N.; Mr. Charles Metcalfe, Mr. Joseph Cox, Mr. J. R. Weatherhead, Mr. Hugh Jackson (Clerk of the Peace), Mr. John Guy Kelk (J.P. for Norfolk), Mr. James Usill, D.L., Mr. R. F. Pate, D.L., Mr. Jas. Watson, Mr. William Peckover, Rev. R. J. King, B.A., Rev. T. P. Holmes, B.A. The morning opened with a peal of bells and the firing of cannon from vessels in the harbour. At ten o'clock the band went to the Mayor's house and received two elegant flags presented by him for the occasion, in which the Royal colours, purple and white, were prominent, one bearing the motto "God Save Queen Victoria," and the other "Prosperity to the Borough of Wisbech." These flags were paraded round the town and affixed to the stewards' platform. Soon after one, the tables on the Market Place were filled with guests, and at the signal given by trumpet, 261 men disappeared—

Not to scour the plain and chase the invading foe,  
To wield the battle axe or strike the chieftain low;  
Their's a noble aim, and boldly they pursue,  
Return triumphant—arm'd with puddings two!

The meat was cooked at the principal hotels and private houses. The cooking of the 542 puddings was undertaken as follows:—Mr. Richard Dawbarn (Dowson and Co.) 100; Messrs. Usill, Ship Lane, 100; Mr. Chas. Boucher's Brewery, 100; Mr. Jos. Bishop, Lion Brewery, 100; The Old Workhouse, 56; Mr. Robert Dawbarn (Dawbarn and Sons) 28; Mr. R. Islip's Brewery, 26; Rose and Crown Hotel, 12. The provision included 261 dishes of meat containing 16 pounds each; 261 dishes of potatoes 14 pounds each; and 542 puddings of 7 pounds each. At the conclusion of the repast, the following toast list was gone through:—

The Queen, Long may she reign, the Company singing  
"God save the Queen."  
The Queen Dowager and the rest of the Royal Family.  
(Band—Duke of York's March).  
The Army and Navy (Band—Rule Britannia).  
The British Constitution (Band—Hearts of Oak).  
Prosperity to the Town and Trade of Wisbech  
(Band—Home, Sweet Home).  
The British Fair Sex  
(Band—Here's a health to all good Lasses).

The rustic sports were held on the Lynn Road, and included a bonnet and cap race for women, the first prize being a Victoria bonnet, and the second a Coronation cap; pig (with soaped tail) race by men; tea drinking by women, not less than 40 years of age; bobbing for oranges in a tub of water; boys to eat penny loaves and treacle with their hands tied behind them; six boys to eat hot hasty pudding for a fustian jacket; and diving for boys into a tub of meal for sixpences, and races by women. A display of fireworks on the Market Place after dark concluded the day's festivities. On the following day, the shops were again closed and rustic sports resumed, with a country dance, which was continued after the market on the third day. Not a single charge was brought before the Mayor, although 50 additional special constables had been sworn in by the Borough Magistrates in case of a disturbance of the peace.

An enthusiastic reception was given by the inhabitants to the Prince and Princess of Wales on their journey from Sandringham to London a few weeks after their marriage. On the 10th of March, 1863, when the wedding of the fair Danish Princess to the Heir to the Throne took place, the happy event was celebrated throughout the Kingdom, the day being kept as a general holiday. Wisbech was not less loyal than other boroughs in its rejoicings over the auspicious event. A procession passed through the principal thoroughfares of the Borough, composed of the Wisbech and Upwell Corps of Volunteers, the Barton School Cadets, the Friendly Societies, the Mayor (Mr. Richard Young, who was serving for the fifth year), and the Members of the Corporation. The Sunday and Day Schools joined in the demonstration, the line of procession extending over a long distance. The marriage was formally proclaimed by the Mayor, as soon as it had taken place, in front of the Town Hall, and a luncheon followed in the Corn Exchange. The children of the schools were provided with a tea, and provisions were distributed to the aged poor. In the evening, the town, which had been decorated, was also illuminated in honour of the auspicious event, and a bonfire was lighted and fireworks discharged near the Harbour-line, on the Nene Parade. The day proved fine at Wisbech, although in several towns unfavourable weather interrupted the festivities. So orderly were the crowds which assembled in the Borough that on the next day there were no cases before the Borough magistrates, and the Mayor was the recipient of a pair of white gloves in recognition of that fact. On the 28th of March, during their honeymoon, the Prince and Princess travelled to Sandringham *via*

Ely and Lynn, where demonstrations of welcome were made, and two or three days later an intimation was received that the Royal bride and bridegroom would pass through Wisbech on their return from Sandringham to London. The Mayor having visited Sandringham to complete arrangements, the visit took place, scarcely six weeks after the wedding, on Saturday morning, April 18th, 1863. A special dais or platform was erected a short distance from Wisbech Station, capable of accommodating about 700 townsmen and their friends, who desired to witness the reception. On the arrival of the train, the Mayor and Corporation presented an address of welcome. The Mayoress was attended by twenty-four young ladies (the Misses Andrews, Berry, Bunning, Collins, M. W. Dawbarn, C. Dawbarn, Exley, Fawcett, Fryer, Gay, Gregory, Hutchinson, Leach, M. Leach, Louth, Malcolm, Mason, McKenzie, Mills, Moore, Peatling, Young, G. de F. Reid, and in the absence of Miss Boucher, Miss F. de Reid took her place), attired in white muslin dresses, half wearing scarlet opera cloaks and half blue cloaks. Surrounded by this bevy of fair women, the Mayoress handed the Princess of Wales a bouquet, and the Prince was presented with an elegantly bound copy of Walker and Craddock's *History of Wisbech*. The newspaper report describing the youthful Princess says:—"The charming face and graceful manners of the Princess were universally victorious. Her Royal Highness was dressed with elegance and taste, and the easy affability with which she acknowledged the greetings of the people captivated everybody. The enthusiasm was contagious, and no sooner had the cheers abated on one side, than the Royal pair was called upon to acknowledge the greetings of Young England on the other side." Major Fryer, the commandant of the Volunteers, having been introduced to the Prince, the guard of honor presented arms as the train left the platform amid the cheers of the people and the strains of the National Anthem.

But the celebration of the completion of the fiftieth year of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria was a still more notable event. The Accession of the Queen in June, 1837, took place when Mr. Weatherhead was Mayor, and Mr. Edward Jackson, Town Clerk. The actual Coronation celebration did not take place until a year later, when Mr. Thomas Dawbarn was Mayor. The Jubilee of the Queen's Accession was somewhat similarly observed, though more elaborate arrangements were made in other respects. An attempt had been made to arrange for a permanent memorial of the Queen's Jubilee by the erection of some building or founding of an institution of permanent utility.



CELEBRATION AT WISBECH OF JUBILEE OF QUEEN VICTORIA'S ACCESSION, JUNE 21ST, 1897.

DINNER GIVEN ON THE MARKET PLACE TO 2,000 EMPLOYEES AND OTHERS.

*From a photograph by J. Kemmell, Wisbech.*



The suggestions included the provision of a swimming bath, which was much needed, a dispensary, or a butter and poultry market, but none of these were thought to be practicable, and a programme of festivities in which young as well as old might participate, was ultimately organised by a committee, under the presidency of the Mayor (Mr. J. T. Hiscox). Many felt regret that the celebration did not leave behind some useful and enduring memento of the auspicious event, but it was urged that it would be impossible to undertake festivities as well, and the financial question over-ruled the memorial idea.

The 21st of June, 1887, was not the first Jubilee celebration of a British Sovereign during this century. Nearly 80 years before — on the 25th October, 1809, a similar celebration of the Jubilee of George III had taken place at Wisbech, when the Wisbech Battalion of Local Militia attended church, and a collection was made in order to provide for the feasting of the poor. Colonel Watson entertained the Charity Schools, and the Workhouse inmates were regaled. But the festivities were less general and spontaneous as compared with the loyal enthusiasm evinced at Queen Victoria's Jubilee when the town of Wisbech was profusely and effectively decorated, the Market Place, High Street and other principal thoroughfares presenting a most festive appearance. A representative procession comprising the Wisbech Volunteers, Barton School Cadet Corps, Friendly Societies, and Sunday Schools, also vehicles containing 30 aged men who had seen three Coronation Festivals, members of the various public bodies, the Steam Fire Engine and Brigade, the Mayor, Mayoress, and Corporation, the Mayor's Chaplain, Corporation Officers, and other gentlemen, started from the Town Hall and halted in Pickard's Lane for a Wellingtonia tree to be planted by the Mayoress. This tree was maliciously destroyed a few months later, by some miscreant, and a new one was planted by the Mayoress on March 10th, 1888, the silver wedding day of the Prince and Princess of Wales. The procession then passed through the principal streets to the Parish Church where a thanksgiving service was held. A united Nonconformist service was also held in Ely Place Chapel simultaneously, with children's services in St. Augustine's Church (where a Jubilee memorial window was unveiled) and at the Free Methodist Chapel. At one o'clock a dinner of cold joints of meat and hot plum-puddings was served to 2,000 employes of business firms of the town, the principals and their friends presiding and carving at the 48 tables. A number of young ladies, boys of the Grammar and Barton



Schools, and others assisted in waiting. A grand stand of effective design had been erected in the centre for the Mayor and Mayoress and their friends, and before dinner the National Anthem was sung, followed by grace given by a choir. The weather was fine and at mid-day the sun shone brilliantly, its rays pouring down with considerable power upon the participants in the out-door banquet. After the dinner, sports took place in the Park, and the tables on the Market Place were again utilised for a tea to 3,250 children, to each of whom a Jubilee medal was presented. About 600 old people were handsomely entertained at the Public Hall, and the Workhouse inmates were provided with dinner of old English fare. The illuminations in the evening, and a display of fireworks concluded a day's festivities that passed off without any serious mishap. The *Advertiser* of June 23rd, published a special report of the celebration, an engraving of the Coronation dinner which took place on June 28th, 1838, from a drawing on the spot by J. P. Hunter, as well as a supplement giving a history of the 50 years' reign of Queen Victoria. The following extract from the report may be worth quoting:—"In addition to the patriarchs who took part in the procession, Mr. Robert Dawbarn, J.P., who is in his 89th year, saw the dinner from his carriage, having witnessed or taken part in, no less than five celebrations in Wisbech in the shape of public dinners on the Market Place. Mr. John Anderson, of Market Street, 87 years of age, was also present, and remembered the first of these celebrations in 1814, when Peace was proclaimed, and had also a distant recollection of the Jubilee of George III in 1809."

Ten years later, on Tuesday, the 22nd of June, 1897, an even more notable celebration took place throughout the Empire in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, as well as of the longest reign in the annals of Great Britain. Its remarkable length, however, is of secondary moment to its character, the material progress and development of its resources, the acquirement of political power by the people, and the spread of education having contributed to the great work of extension of Empire and civilization which have distinguished the sixty years' reign of Queen Victoria the Good, as her subjects have often denominated the reigning Sovereign. As has been justly observed: "A reign which saw in its earlier years the application of the electric current to the task of transmitting messages, the first successful attempts to make use of steam for the business of Transatlantic navigation, the general development of the railway

system all over these countries, and the introduction of the penny post, must be considered to have obtained for itself, had it secured no other memorials, an abiding place in history. Add to these triumphs in the domain of industrial science, those achievements in the realms of literature, of art, of science, and of politics with which they have gone hand in hand, and he would be a courageous man who would place any age of English history whatsoever before our own in respect of that which it has accomplished and brought forth." What words may serve more fitly than the lines of one whose writings are themselves to be reckoned not least among the glories of Her Majesty's reign—words which are true and moving no less to-day than when they were penned by Tennyson just forty-five years ago:—

Her court was pure; her life serene;  
 God gave her peace; her land repose;  
 A thousand claims to reverence closed  
 In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen.

The completion of such an eventful period, and the health happily enjoyed by Her Majesty, enabled the Diamond Jubilee National Festivities to be celebrated with such magnificence in London that the procession, representative of the Empire's wealth and power, will ever remain an historical and memorable event. In almost every provincial town local celebrations also took place, but with that ceremonial which was organised in Wisbech this work is chiefly concerned. From the Mayor of this ancient Borough and Lord Lieutenant of the County to the humblest inhabitant there was a general desire to carry out the day's rejoicings with the maximum of enjoyment and the minimum of unwise indulgence or disorder. The day was typical of that Queen's weather with which Providence has favoured so many prominent events in Her Majesty's life. The excessive heat of 1887 was absent, but the genial rays of the sun, tempered by a welcome breeze, made the day exactly suitable to the exceptional circumstances required to ensure success. Amidst a forest of flags and a wealth of decorations, a procession was organised in the early morning, opposite to the Town Hall, the length of which is indicated by the fact that it took twenty minutes to pass a given point, and was fully representative of the town and neighbourhood. Police, Volunteers, Barton School Cadets, were followed by the Friendly Societies, comprising four lodges of Oddfellows, one of Foresters, and four of Shepherds, with their imposing banners and regalia. Then came the Working Men's Institute Committee, the Steam Fire Engine and Fire Brigade,

quite an array of horses and vehicles illustrating the various trades and industries of the town, Grammar School Boys, Clergy, Hospital Committee, Charity Trustees, School Board, Board of Guardians, Magistrates, Jubilee Committee, the Corporation in carriages, the Mayoress and Ex-Mayoress, the Lord Lieutenant of Cambs. (Mr. Alexander Peckover) wearing his scarlet academical robes as LL.D. of Cambridge, the Mayor (Councillor Bellars) in his robes of office, Deputy-Mayor (Councillor Robinson Smith) the Vicar and the Mayor's Chaplain (Rev. R. E. R. Watts) in his robes, and the Town Clerk (Mr. Fra. Jackson). The Sunday School children, accompanied by clergy and ministers, assembled on the South Brink and headed the procession as it traversed the principal streets, amid the clanging of bells and through the assembled crowds from town and country, who crowded the pavements. A service was afterwards held in the Parish Church, in which the Rev. R. E. R. Watts, the Rev. R. Boyer, and Canon Stokes took part, the Rev. C. H. Crossley, Vicar of St. Augustine's, preaching from the words, "As the Lord liveth, before Whom I stand." The dinner to nearly 2,000 *employés* and others took place on the Market Place, and was witnessed by a great number of people from behind the barriers erected, or from the windows and balconies of the surrounding residences. The sight was one, which will not be readily forgotten, the brilliancy of the day and the effectiveness of the decorations, of which the grand stand was the central feature, and the general joyous but orderly demeanour of the crowds constituting the spectacle one of remarkable interest. During the dinner, the Mayor received a telegram from Her Majesty, despatched as she was leaving Buckingham Palace, which was as follows:—

From my heart I thank my beloved people. May God bless them. The sun is shining brightly. V.R. and I.

The programme included a *feu de joie* by the Volunteers and Royal Salute, the Band playing the National Anthem, followed by cheers for Her Majesty. After dinner, sports were held in the Park, the Mayoress distributing the prizes. Tea was subsequently provided on the Market Place, this time the feasting being for 2,500 children, whose happy faces betokened their pleasure. A fancy dress cycle parade in the evening, varied and tasteful illuminations, and finally a magnificent bonfire in the centre of the Park, with its flames mounting up forty feet high and shedding its lurid glare on the vast concourse of people gathered on the sward, at the close of the day, to witness the concluding



*From a photograph by J. Kemerell, Wisbech.*

CELEBRATION AT WISBECH OF DIAMOND JUBILEE OF QUEEN VICTORIA'S ACCESSION, JUNE 22ND, 1897.  
TEA ON THE MARKET PLACE GIVEN TO 2500 CHILDREN.



spectacle of an admirably arranged programme. The inmates of the Union and Workhouse were remembered in the festive arrangements. As a permanent memorial of the day, the endowment of a bed in the North Cambridgeshire Hospital at Wisbech was provided by the subscription of £300 in the town (in addition to the amount raised for the festivities) and to this a sum should be added of £600, contributed by Miss P. H. Peckover, Miss Algerina Peckover, and Miss Wilhelmina Peckover. A distinctive mark of an eventful year was the gift by Mr. G. W. Mills, of Downham Market and Wisbech, of five almshouses erected on the Lynn Road, in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee, and referred to elsewhere. The planting of trees and placing of seats on the Lynn Road was an improvement carried out by Mr. Wm. Girling and Mr. Jas. Long in association with the same commemoration. Amongst those who witnessed the scene was Mrs. Robt. Wherry (widow of Ald. Wherry) in her 88th year, and who recalled the Peace Celebration in 1814, the Coronation Festivals of George IV. and William IV., the Queen's Coronation Festival, and the two Jubilee Commemorations of 1887 and 1897—six distinct national events of a remarkable character. This national holiday, carried through by a local committee of which the Mayor was chairman, Mr. J. H. Foster secretary, and Mr. A. E. Clarke treasurer, will be vividly impressed upon the minds of young and old in Wisbech, so long as life may last, as one of the most successful celebrations of the Nineteenth Century, commemorating the remarkable and unprecedentedly long reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, as expressed in one of the decorative mottoes displayed—"Queen and Nation, Sixty Years United."

The wedding day of the Duke of York and Princess May was observed in Wisbech with loyal manifestations. The sad incident which bereft the Princess of the elder brother—the Duke of Clarence—who died at Sandringham, awakened a sympathetic interest, and like the late Emperor of Russia, who married his deceased brother's *fiancée*, the Duke of York sought the Princess's hand, placing her as the wife of the heir presumptive in the position that she was expecting to occupy, when Prince Albert Victor's death intervened. In Wisbech, the festivities consisted of a dinner given on the lawn of the Workhouse on the auspicious day, July 6th, 1893; to the inmates of the Workhouse, by the Mayor and Mayoress (Mr. and Mrs. George Carrick), a free tea to the old people in the Corn Exchange, a concert in the evening by lady and gentlemen amateurs; also festivities at the Hospital, as well as a tea to juveniles in Eastfield. There was a display

of flags and mottoes and the day was observed as a general holiday. The Corporation presented an address of congratulation to the Queen, the Working Men's Institute also forwarding an address.

There have been occasions also of a sad and solemn character associated with the decease of Royal personages and prominent statesmen. One of the latter was the funeral of the Duke of Wellington on September 18th, 1852, when the Mayor (Mr. Fraser) issued a placard inviting the tradesmen to close their business establishments. Funeral services were held in the places of worship and at the Parish Church, £18 was collected as a Wellington Tribute Fund, from which blankets were to be annually given to the poor so long as it lasted. Two days before Christmas, on December 23rd, 1861, the funeral of the Prince Consort took place, business being suspended during the funeral, and memorial services were held in the churches. At the Parish Church, the Volunteers attended and the Rev. W. B. Hopkins preached. A few days later, a county meeting was held at Cambridge to pass a vote of condolence with Her Majesty in her irreparable loss. More recently similar evidences of loyal and sympathetic feelings towards Her Majesty, as well as to the parents, the Prince and Princess of Wales, were forthcoming at the funeral of Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence, and heir presumptive to the English throne.

One singular incident may be mentioned which caused a considerable sensation at the time, and has found its place in more than one history of the present reign. In 1850, a retired officer, named Robert Pate, the son of a wealthy and respected corn merchant at Wisbech, who had served the office of High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, made an attack upon the Queen which resulted in a sentence of seven years' transportation. Pate was 43 years of age at the time and had been a lieutenant in the 10th Hussars, from which regiment he was requested to retire on account of some eccentric conduct. As Queen Victoria was driving on June 26th, 1850, from the Duke of Cambridge's residence, where she had been inquiring after her uncle's health in his last illness, Pate, a man standing 6 feet 2 inches in height, advanced two or three paces to the carriage and struck Her Majesty with a light cane a sharp blow on the head and bonnet. One bystander whose loyal feelings were outraged dealt Pate a blow on the face which drew blood, and the assailant of Her Majesty was immediately arrested. Sir James Clark, Her Majesty's physician, deposed at his trial that

the Queen was suffering from an incision upon her left temple from which blood flowed, and the forehead was much swollen. It was said that the accused was subject to attacks of mental excitement, and rumour said that a bet which Pate had made instigated the attack. The Judge, however did not accept any such plea of mental disorder in mitigation, and the sentence already mentioned was passed. After the expiration of his term Pate resided in Hobart Town, Tasmania, and later returned to England. He was remarkably kind to his father's old servants, allowing them a pension (one of them was a custodian at the Wisbech Corn Exchange) until their death. Mr. Pate lived to the age of 88 years, and left personally to the amount of £22,464, his wife being sole legatee. This was the third attack that had been made upon the Queen, and since that time three others have taken place, but happily no serious injury has ever been sustained by Her Majesty.

The termination of the Crimean war was celebrated in Wisbech as an event calling for especial rejoicing. On March 31st, 1856, the Mayor (Mr. Fraser) received a message announcing the signing of the Treaty of Peace with Russia, in Paris on the previous day. On the 16th May, a public meeting was held at the Town Hall to arrange for a Peace Celebration, when it was resolved to provide a tea for the children, an amendment proposed, that no expense should be incurred, being lost. The celebration took place on the 4th of June, when the festivities included a cricket match between grocers' and drapers' employees, a Friendly Societies' procession, a dinner at the Public Hall, Sunday Schools' procession, sports and tea, 3,000 children being feasted on the Market Place. A display of fireworks on the Market Place in the evening brought the day's proceedings to an end.

Amongst the visits of scientific and antiquarian Societies, that of the British Archæological Association to Wisbech in August, 1878, when the 35th Annual Congress was held in the Capital of the Fens, was a memorable and interesting event. The proceedings were opened with an inaugural address from the Earl of Hardwicke, President of the Association, who was welcomed by the Mayor and Corporation, and presented with an address on vellum, embellished with views of the Church, Town Hall, Bridge, &c. The President, in an able address lasting for an hour and twenty minutes, epitomised the history of the Fens and the efforts which had been made to reclaim its fertile soil for the use of man. The roads and banks of the Romans were mentioned as instances of these attempts, and what was once the



home of wild fowl, rushes, and fish, had been transformed into a vast corn-producing area. He passed in review the history of the drainage of the Fens and referred to the fact that Rennie, in later years, had shown that the method of drainage begun by the Romans (gravitation) was the true system. Archæology he regarded as the twin sister of history—the illustrator of many an otherwise dark page in our history's annals—inculcating a respect for old age and a regard for the collection of valuable facts and data of the past. Afterwards a vote of thanks was passed to the noble President. The Parish Church was then inspected under the guidance of Canon Scott, and a visit paid to the Roman Bank and Leverington Church. After examining this edifice, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sharpe entertained the Association at their residence in this pretty village. The tumulus, known as the Rabbit Hill, which had been recently excavated without any satisfactory result, was then viewed, and in the evening there was a grand evening banquet in the Public Hall, under the presidency of the Mayor (Mr. Charles Gane). This was one of the most successful efforts of local hospitality that have taken place in Wisbech, the arrangements being well carried out and the decorations being most effective. About 200 were present, including the Mayor and Mayoress, the Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire (Mr. Chas. W. Townley), the Earl of Hardwicke, Archdeacon Emery, Canon and Mrs. Scott, Captain Catling, Canon Hopkins, Dr. Bellamy, the Corporation, Members of the Association, and many others. In the course of the evening the generous hospitality shown to the Association was handsomely acknowledged, and some interesting speeches and glees by the English Glee Union added to the success of a notable gathering.

On the following day, Ely Cathedral was visited under the guidance of Archdeacon Emery, Mr. Loftus Brock, F.S.A., Mr. M. H. Bloxam and others giving descriptions of the noble edifice. The Wisbech Museum was seen on their return and a compliment paid to its admirable arrangement and to the excellence of its collection. Houses in the High Street and Market Place, the half timbered buildings in the New Inn Yard and Nene Quay, with some underground vaulted chambers were also inspected. Mr. Exley's vaults in Bridge Street were thought to have formed part of a culvert to admit river water into the moat of the ancient Castle at Wisbech. In the evening, Mr. Morgan, the Vice-President, read a paper on "Roman Roads in Cambridgeshire," and Mr. Jonathan Peckover dealt with the excavations of tumuli in the neighbourhood. Mr. R. B. Dawbarn contributed a

paper "On the Ancient Castle of Wisbech," which contained much interesting data. On Wednesday the Association members drove to Walsoken, West Walton, Walpole St Peter and Terrington churches, thence to Lynn, Swaffham, and Castleacre, where Mr. Loftus gave a description of Castleacre Priory. The evening meeting at Wisbech brought out papers from Mr. Grover on "Ancient Reclamations in the English Fen Lands," and from Mr. W. de Gray Birch on the "Life of St. Guthlac," from MSS. in the British Museum. Lynn with its Corporation regalia was visited on Thursday, as well as Castle Rising and Sandringham, where the members were entertained by the Prince of Wales. The evening meeting in the Museum Library was not commenced until half-past nine and Mr. S. H. Miller, F.R.M.S., read a paper on "Traces of the Romans in the Isle of Ely." Dr. J. S. Phené, F.S.A., gave some reminiscences of an old Scholar of King's Lynn Grammar School, on the Archæology of the Wash and suggestions thereon. On Friday the visit to Thorney and Crowland Abbeys, with luncheon, by invitation of the Duke of Bedford at Thorney, was somewhat spoilt by showers of rain and a cold cheerless wind, nevertheless some proceeded by railway to Spalding, and returned in time to hear a paper entitled "Notes on Symbolism in Early and Mediæval Architecture," by Mr. Ferrey; "Notes on Ancient Yarmouth," by Mr. C. H. Compton; and "Architectural Notes on Thorney Abbey," by Mr. Charles Lynam. Saturday was the last day of the Congress so far as Wisbech was concerned, and the members visited Peterborough, thence to the Roman station of Durobrivæ, where Mr. Morgan read a paper on the "Camp." At Stamford, the members arrived a little late for the Mayor's luncheon, and visited Burghley. In the evening, there was an exhibition at the Town Hall of ancient manuscripts belonging to the Corporation, and antique jewellery lent by Mr. and Miss Peckover. Mr. Birch described these, pointing out a 14th Century MS. "The Mirror of Human Salvation," which needed putting into repair and advised the expenditure of a few pounds for binding and preserving these manuscripts, which could not be found in many East Anglian towns. The suggestion as to binding caused a lively discussion, some members advocating their preservation in cases. Votes of thanks were passed to the Bishop and Clergy for their welcome to the Association, to the Mayor and Corporation, the Local Committee and Secretaries (Dr. Douglas Lithgow and Mr. Leach), and to the Prince of Wales, Duke of Bedford, Mr. H. Sharpe, and others who had hospitably entertained the Associa-

tion. The readers of papers were also thanked, and a remark concluded the proceedings at Wisbech that the results of the Congress would be found in the Society's journal, in which the papers read and the places visited find detailed record. Monday and Tuesday were spent at Cambridge, and the Congress concluded on the evening of the latter day, after ten days of most successful and interesting research in the Fen Country.

A more detailed account, with the papers read at this Congress, will be found in the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 1879 volume, which is in the library of Wisbech Museum. We may quote the concluding sentences of this record, referring to the part taken by Vermuyden in draining the Fens. They are as follows:—

When we reflect on the vast magnitude of the work—no less than the annexation of a territory of 680,000 acres to the area of our country, we may well join the great Dutchman (Vermuyden) in the pious remark with which he concludes one of his speeches. "I presume" says he "to say no more of the work lest I should be accounted vain-glorious, although I might truly affirm that the present or former age have done nothing like it for the general good of the nation. I humbly desire that God may have the glory for his blessing and bringing to perfection my poor endeavours at the vast charge of the Earl of Bedford and his participants." . . . The object of our Congresses I conceive to be not only the publication of information on the great works of past times but the recording of the names of great men connected with them. I trust that this Wisbech Congress will give due honour to the great name of Sir Cornelius Vermuyden, to whom our country owes so much; and perhaps the British Archaeological Association may, in bringing his name forward at this time be the means of obtaining public recognition of his great services, and of recommending a suitable monument, for he has deserved as much from his adopted country; but his memory has been hitherto forgotten."

This is not the first time this suggestion has been made, the Rev. Frederic Jackson, of Parson Drove, in a letter to the *Isle of Ely and Wisbech Advertiser*, some time ago, proposing that a memorial to the Dutch engineer should be erected in Wisbech, the Capital of the Fens.

## CHAPTER XX.

## INAUGURATION OF THE VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT.

## MIDDLE LEVEL INUNDATION.



IN view of a possible invasion from French shores, a company of Volunteers about sixty strong was raised nearly a century ago—in 1797—officered by Captain Rayner, Lieutenant Hardwicke, and Ensign Fawssett, jun. This remained in existence until 1801, but in 1807 it became necessary, in view of the fear of a foreign enemy landing on British shores, that a new infantry corps of 300 men should be raised, the Thorney and Whittlesey men uniting with those of Wisbech under the command of Colonel Rayner and Major Edes. When the former resigned, Colonel William Watson, author of the *History of Wisbech*, was appointed to the command and an additional infantry company was formed at Wisbech, raising the strength of the battalion to 600. It was known as the Third Cambridge Regiment of Volunteer Infantry and from this body, under the Act of 1808, the Isle of Ely Militia Regiment was subsequently formed with a strength of 1,200 men. In 1813 an Act was passed to enable the King to accept the services of the Militia from their respective counties, and when the regiment assembled at Wisbech a considerable proportion of officers and men volunteered their services, an offer which they were not called upon to fulfil.

The inauguration of the Volunteer movement, which has become a permanent adjunct of the defences of this country, took place in the latter end of 1859 and in the beginning of 1860.

The Wisbech Volunteer Corps was formed at that time and formally received its colours and bugle from the Mayoress, Mrs. Richard Young, representing the ladies of Wisbech, on January 24th, 1860. The total muster of the company was 71, and two members were absent. In their new Lincoln green uniforms, the Volunteers headed by a drum and fife band formed from the Union boys under Mr. Godfrey's training, marched from the Corn Exchange to the Market Place for the ceremonial. The Mayor and Mayoress drove up in their carriage, the Beadle (John Todd) having charge of the Queen's colour. In presenting the flag, the Mayoress made the following appropriate speech to the officers and privates of the corps:—"I have great pleasure in presenting to the Wisbech Volunteer Rifle Corps in the name of the ladies, this beautiful flag. May it ever be borne as peacefully and proudly as it is now presented. May God bless England and her Volunteers, officers and men, in peace or in war, in health and in sickness, in life and in death. May Wisbech especially be blest, and may no false step retard her prosperity or disturb her peace." Captain Fryer suitably accepted and acknowledged the gift, and turning to the company said in emphatic tones:—"This colour is presented to you by the ladies of Wisbech. Take it! Respect it as the gift of the ladies; honour it as the emblem of your Queen! Stick to it like Englishmen! Never tarnish it, never desert it!" The company responded with three cheers and the Mayoress then presented the bugle, expressing the hope that the enemy would never be near enough to hear its call. Captain Fryer having handed this to the company, the ceremony ended and after marching to Lieutenant Francis Jackson's house, returned to the church, where a sermon was preached by the Rev. W. B. Hopkins from the following words in Nehemiah, "Every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon." Afterwards the company dined at the Rose and Crown Hotel, where the presentation flag, with the Queen's Crown on a Union Jack ground and the words "Wisbech Volunteer Rifle Corps" was displayed; also the Corporation Flag, which was in the Great Exhibition of 1851, and Captain Fryer's crest and motto, *Jamais Arriere* (Never behind). In proposing success to the Volunteers, the Rev. W. B. Hopkins mentioned that he had heard a comparison of Lynn and Wisbech which amused him, but it was confirmed by the energy Wisbech had shown in responding to the Volunteer call. His informant said—"Oh Lynn is the place for money, but Wisbech is the place for

spirit." He had found the latter to be so, and they had proof of it in the proceedings of that day. There was some little friction because Wisbech was not made the first company in the county battalion, as it was undoubtedly the first corps originated, but this soon subsided. Sergt. Major Hare was the earliest drill-sergeant of the corps, and on leaving the corps a year later was presented with a gold watch and chain. At the same time Captain Fryer announced his resignation as Captain, and his appointment as Major of the 1st Cambs. (Isle of Ely) Battalion, was gazetted. The first commissioned and non-commissioned officers of the corps were:—Captain Fryer, Lieutenant Jackson, Ensign R. Young, Hon. Surgeon F. Fawcett, Sergeant-Major Hare, Sergeant C. F. Lincoln, Sergeant Robert Bennett, Sergeant E. O. Dyson, Sergeant Mantegani, Corporal Alfred Bothamley, Corporal William Hides, Corporal Parish, Corporal Thomas Patrick. Among the privates who survive, the following may be named:—J. T. Archer, Henry Bell, W. Bray, R. C. Burrows, J. T. Butcher, Henry Burrell, John Harrison, George Oliver, William Patrick, F. Peatling, G. H. Porter, H. G. Redin, W. M. Rust, and Edward Ulyat. The Mayor (Mr. Richard Young) and the Town Clerk (Mr. F. Jackson) were presented at Court on the 5th of February, wearing their Lincoln green uniform under their official robes, and were said to be the first wearers of the Volunteer uniform who had been received by the Queen. The officers also attended a special reception of Volunteer officers by Her Majesty in the following month, and were presented by the Lord Lieutenant. In October, 1860, a detachment of the Wisbech Corps attended the funeral of General Sir Harry Smith, G.C.B., at Whittlesey, and on the 26th of the same month, the Earl of Hardwicke, the Lord Lieutenant, officially reviewed the corps. The Lord Lieutenant was met at the station by the Mayor in a carriage and four, an address was presented to him, and he was driven to the parade ground on the Lynn Road for the inspection. Afterwards, the Earl of Hardwicke, Lieutenant Colonel Wale, the Revs. Sir Algernon Peyton, W. Bonner Hopkins, Henry Jackson, John Davies, Captain Catling, Lieutenant Francis Jackson, Lieutenant W. L. Ollard, and others were entertained to luncheon at Osborne House, the plate presented to the Mayor a short time before, adorning the table. Subsequently, the command of the corps was given to Captain Jackson, who was afterwards succeeded by Capt. F. M. Metcalfe. Capt. Geo. Carrick, Capt. English and Capt. Copeman have also worked energetically to maintain the efficiency of the corps, which is now attached to the

3rd Cambs. R.V. Suffolk Regiment, and usually holds an annual encampment and Battalion prize shooting competition. In March, 1895, long service medals were presented by Colonel Collins, commanding the 12th Regimental District, to the following volunteers who have honourably served their Queen and country for the periods named:—Lieutenant J. H. Chamberlin, the only officer in the battalion entitled to the distinction; Quarter-Master Sergeant Malt, 34 years service (28 in Wisbech and six in Spalding); Ex-Colour Sergeant Archer, 30 years; Colour-Sergeant Bambridge, 30 years; Ex-Corporal James Archer, 22 years. Sixty members of the Battalion were entitled to this special decoration, which was publicly presented at Cambridge, and the recipients were afterwards hospitably entertained at dinner in King's College Hall, Cambridge.

#### THE MIDDLE LEVEL INUNDATION.

The failure of the great engineering undertaking, popularly known as the Nene Valley Drainage Scheme (inaugurated in the year 1852 and finally disposed of 10 years afterwards) by reason of financial difficulties, had a disastrous effect upon Wisbech, which had expended a large sum of money, without receiving corresponding benefit. Another disaster, namely the destruction of the Outfall Sluice, which discharged the waters of the Middle Level into the Sea, through the river Ouse, though not affecting Wisbech in the same way, was an event of serious importance to many of the Marshland farmers and others who attended its weekly markets, and must be associated with the history of the town and immediate neighbourhood. The Middle Level is a division of the Great Level of the Fens, called the Bedford Level, and contains about 140,000 acres. Fortunately Wisbech itself—town and parish—escaped the inundation which followed the bursting of the sluice, and, being outside the Level, also escaped the taxation which was a result of that calamity. The Middle Level has long carried its waters to the sea through the Ouse. More than 50 years ago, conflicting interests and rival drainage theories were sufficiently harmonised to enable Mr. James Walker, then a leading hydraulic engineer, to devise a scheme for improving the drainage and navigation of the Level, which was sanctioned by and carried out under an Act of Parliament passed in the year 1844, supplemented by another Act passed in 1848. Under the first named Act, a new cut called the main drain was constructed, having a bottom width of 50 feet. It was about 12 miles long and extended from a

point near the upper end of the Eau Brink Cut in the parish of Wiggshall St. German, passing southward through Magdalen, Marshland and Bardolph Fens, and a sluice at Outwell, called the Aqueduct Sluice, to the Sixteen Feet river, one of the old water courses of the Level known as Thurloe's Drain. There were of course other rivers and drains to be made, and many, including the Sixteen Feet, to be widened, deepened and altered under the Parliamentary powers referred to, but the only work which need be specially named in connection with our narrative was the Main Outfall Sluice built close to the Ouse. That was a substantial structure consisting of a bridge of three arches, each of 20 feet span, resting on piers of great solidity, and flanked on both sides with wide spreading wings or walls to support the adjacent banks. Each of the arches enclosed a pair of very strong oaken doors or gates opening towards the river, and constituting self-acting sluices which allowed the waters to pass outwards, but prevented tidal waters from entering the drain. The cost of Mr. Walker's scheme (including nearly £30,000 for the sluice) was about £650,000.

The sluice was considered to be a great work of art and engineering skill. Mr. Hawksley, C.E. (a man of much reputation) inspected and sketched it only a few weeks before it collapsed. He was in the neighbourhood on other business, and went and studied it as a professional man in the same line of engineering would naturally do, when he met with a display of superior ability in sluice building. He admired the fabric and had no suspicion that it was in any danger.

The sluice, after standing for 15 years, gave way on the evening of the 4th May, 1862. No one anticipated any such disaster until the morning of that day. Mr. Lunn, the superintendent of the Middle Level Works, father of the present superintendent, immediately set men and horses and carts to work energetically. But the water gained the upper hand, and the same night, despite the efforts to stop the undermining of the foundations, two of the three arches fell in with a terrific crash, the men at work narrowly escaping injury. Iron, stone, and wood were alike split and crushed by the tremendous weight of the ruin. The immediate effects will not be readily forgotten. The gap on the east side widened rapidly, and instead of a 60ft. waterway it was nearly doubled. Through this the tidal water of the Ouse rushed with considerable impetus, and carried everything before it. Lighters were sunk, one of the bridges was swept away, and thousands of sacks, sent from Wisbech by Messrs.



Dawbarn and Sons and others, filled with earth, were vainly thrown in the swirling tide to attempt to dam its course. But worse mischief was to follow. The banks of the drain were not constructed to bear such a weight of water, and eight days after the sluice had collapsed—on the 12th May—the western bank gave way, a gap, 150 feet wide being made, through which the water poured like a torrent on to the lands many feet below the level of the tide. Happily, there was sufficient warning to enable the farmers to get their families and live stock away, as well as to remove some of their farm and household goods into a place of safety. But the homesteads, crops, implements, and those goods which were not easily removable were soon covered with water to the depth of several feet, causing great destruction of property in a district of much fertility, rich with the promise of valuable crops. The Wisbech and Lynn railway line was under water, the trains being sent *via* Ely, while the telegraph posts were carried away and the adjacent country was like an inland sea. The writer remembers sailing in a boat over the inundated Marshland Fen, and watching the train trying to force its way over the flooded line, an attempt that failed because the fires were put out by the depth of the water. A visit was paid to Mrs. Neep, a farmer's wife who took refuge in the upper rooms of her house and pluckily refused to abandon her household goods. The scene was so unique, that special trains were run from London to see the "Great Fen Flood," and the Marshland inundation was the subject of many illustrations in the papers.\*

Mr. James Walker, being of advanced age and in delicate health, was unable to deal with the emergency, and on his recommendation Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Hawkshaw was called in and the Commissioners placed themselves in his hands with instructions to do the best he could, regardless of expense. Mr. Hawkshaw engaged the services of Mr. J. T. Leather as contractor. But it was not within the wit and power of man to deal with the adversary effectually without many experiments and many failures. It was an anxious time for all parties—for the engineers who sought to construct a barrier which would prevent the rush of water at each tide—for the Middle Level Board, who with Mr. Edward Fellowes, M.P. (afterwards the first Lord De Ramsey) their chairman, gave unremitting attention to every

\* Of course, in a period of such excitement, there was much exaggeration. For instance, the *Times* newspaper, notwithstanding that it was in possession of correct information, persisted for many days in representing the flood as covering 40,000 acres of land, instead of about 6,000 acres.

detail—and for the landowners and farmers whose lands and crops were covered, notably Messrs. Little, Wright, Neep, John Markham and F. Catling. The water reached to within about four miles of Wisbech, the level of the ground fortunately preventing its coming nearer. At length, after consulting many engineers, Dutch as well as English, Mr. Hawkshaw succeeded in erecting a coffer dam across the drain, about 880 yards above the fallen sluice, notwithstanding the force of the ebbing and flowing tides which had a rise and fall at ordinary springs of 19 feet, and the waters were finally shut out on the 19th June, 1862, the sluice having fallen on the 4th May preceding. The central portion of the coffer dam, 88 feet in width, consisted of a system of panels, sliding between piles, which were dropped into their place from above, the bottom ones being well driven into the mud. There were two rows of these, 25 feet apart. After they were all in place up to low water, the two rows were well tied together and the space between them filled with puddle and clunch from Wansford.

An arrangement for the carrying on of the drainage of the Middle Level was made in the first instance through Salter's Lode Sluice, eight miles higher up the Ouse. For obvious reasons, such an arrangement could not be satisfactory. Another scheme was then proposed and adopted by Sir John Hawkshaw, viz., the employment of 16 syphons, each 3 feet 6 inches in diameter placed across a dam in the river and capable of discharging in case of floods at least 73 millions of cubic feet of water in a single tide. This system, after a trial of several years, did not prove sufficient for the requirements of the upper portion of the Level, and an Act of Parliament was obtained in 1874 to replace the syphons by a new sluice.

Before proceeding further, it may be well to quote from a work published by the late Mr. J. M. Heathcote, entitled *Reminiscences of Fen and Mere*. Mr. Heathcote was one of the largest proprietors in the Level and a member of the Board, and his vivid description, as an eye witness, of the scenes of destruction, whether strictly accurate or not in every respect, cannot fail to be interesting:—

I was in London when the news arrived that Marshland Sluice was in ruins. It is difficult to conceive the consternation of the Commissioners and the dismay of Mr. Walker, the engineer. The river was guarded by a sluice which permitted the exit of the upland water as the tide receded, but prevented its entrance when the tide returned. It was constructed soon after 1844, before Whittlesey Mere was drained.

The inhabitants of Marshland opposed the passing of the Middle Level Act, and a country man is reported to have predicted that "Whittlesea Mere would come down here."\* The tidal water first oozed underneath the level of the sluice and as no effectual means were taken to stop its power and volume, gradually increased till at length the whole fabric gave way at once; the salt water rushed up Marshland Cut and at some weak portion of the bank it flowed into the adjoining country. At each succeeding tide there was increased pressure and more water overflowed, until at last, it was declared that 6,000 acres were drowned. A brief description of a scene which I witnessed during this inundation may be acceptable. I stood on the bank close by a breach many yards wide which admitted a fresh stream of tidal water at every return of the tide up the cut. A vast extent of water covered the whole surface of the district before us. Nothing was to be seen but water, except that an occasional farmhouse and willows, a few posts and the tops of hedges just appeared above what was now a lake. Here and there was a boat going to or returning from an inundated residence to save the wreck of furniture. The whole country being below the datum level, with an ordinary high tide 20 to 22 feet above it, offered a melancholy prospect. Shortly afterwards I attended with a party of Middle Level Commissioners to inspect the ruins of the bridge and the spot where the syphons have since been erected. Sir John Hawkshaw, C.E. and Mr. Appold, whose centrifugal pump was used in the drainage of Whittlesea Mere, were present. The chairman was chosen and we all sat on an enormous beam contemplating the terrible race that was running from the sea, and listening to various suggestions made as to remedies. All were given in perfect confidence that the course of the water might be arrested. One of the most plausible schemes proposed was that of taking a number of hulks, filling them with stone and scuttling them in order across the river. Sir John Hawkshaw was consulted and his plan was adopted. He drove piles in the narrowest part of the channel, for the purpose of confining the rush of water† and to allow the erection of syphons. The dam effectually stopped the flow of the tide and the upland waters during many years passed safely through

\* Mr. Heathcote appears to have misapprehended the drift of the countryman's remark which he here quotes. Marshland is a low lying tract and is therefore, in a sense, adapted for a reservoir when water flows into it from a higher level. The countryman, when he made the observation, was no doubt, like others of similar penetration, not thinking of a sluice bursting from the pressure of the tides of the Ouse, but that the drain, large as it was and is, with its banks at the top upwards of a hundred feet apart, would be unable to contain and carry the inland waters of the Level (including those of Whittlesey Mere) in their passage to the sea. It was a flood from the inland waters he feared and not salt water from the ocean. This deprives him of his claim to foresight, as no event has happened or is likely to happen corresponding with his prediction.

† Sir John stopped the rush of waters by means of sliding panels, or closed doors, working in piles, which, when ready, were all lowered in their places at one low water and proved effectual, thus allowing of the construction of the dam and the erection of the syphons.

the syphons. The number of them was 16. Soon after the ebb of the tide began, and when there was a difference of three inches of level, a small steam engine on the bank exhausted a portion of air within each syphon. From that time the rush of water began to pour outward to the sea. An Act of Parliament was obtained, without opposition, to adopt the syphons as a temporary measure. It was subsequently found that four feet of level were lost to the upper country in times of high flood. In the wet season of 1871, many acres were drowned, and in 1874 an Act was obtained to restore the sluice on a new site under the advice and control of Sir John Hawkshaw.

Of course there were many claims for compensation from the parties whose property had been injured by the flood, and as the Commissioners denied their liability at law the question had to be determined by an appeal to the Courts.

The action of *Coe v. Wise* was selected as a test case, and was tried at the Norwich Assizes. Chief Justice Erle left four questions to the jury (1) Was damage caused to the plaintiff by the absence of due care and skill on the part of the defendants in making the Sluice? (2) In respect of maintaining the Sluice? (3) In respect of providing remedies against mischief after the Sluice was destroyed? (4) By reason that no puddle wall was made. Upon the first question the verdict was for the defendants. Upon the other three the verdict was for the plaintiff. Then arose a question whether or not upon these findings the Commissioners were liable for the negligence and improper conduct of the contractors' agents and servants employed by them to make and maintain the works which they were authorised and required to construct. This was a legal point to be argued and decided in the first instance by the Court of Queen's Bench. In Hilary Term, 1864, Lord C. J. Cockburn, Mr. Justice Blackburn, and Mr. Justice Mellor, after hearing the arguments on both sides, were of opinion that the defendants were not liable. Meanwhile, however, two cases called the Mersey Docks Cases were slowly making their way to the House of Lords, the supreme legal tribunal, which involved the question in contest. Those cases were decided in a direction fatal to the defendants, and when *Coe v. Wise* went to the Exchequer Chamber, the next Court of Appeal, as it was bound to do with such large interests concerned, the decision of the Queen's Bench was reversed, and the Commissioners made liable for all damages occasioned by the bursting of the sluice.

The New Outfall Sluice rendered necessary by the insufficiency of the syphons was designed by and carried out under Sir John Hawkshaw, Mr. William Webster being the contractor. It was

placed on the eastern side of the original drain, which was diverted for a length of nine hundred yards, and then returned to its former course. The selection of the site was made for various reasons, one of which was the desirability of laying the foundations in undisturbed ground, and another, the fear of interfering with the action of the syphons during the progress of the work. The contract price of the sluice was £60,000, independently of the land required for the undertaking.

We have referred to the taxation, which was a necessary consequence of the calamity. The taxable lands in the Level amount to about 112,000 acres, and as there were no funds which could be specially appropriated to meet the compensations awarded to the sufferers by the inundation, and pay for the restoration of banks and works and provide for a temporary passage for the waters of the Level through the main drain, Parliament was applied to in 1867 with the object of procuring the necessary means. By an Act passed in that year an annual tax of 1s. 6d. per acre was laid, upon the security of which money was borrowed for the purposes named. In all probability the money so raised will be repaid, and the tax cease before the end of the present century. By another Act (passed in 1874) by which time the syphons had been condemned, the Commissioners were authorised to levy a further tax not exceeding one shilling per acre for providing a new Outfall Sluice and other works with power to borrow on the tax £80,000. The tax has, in fact, never exceeded 8d. per acre, and will be paid off in all probability within the next twenty years.

It was not easy at the time, and it is not easy now, more than thirty years after the occurrence, to say what was the cause of the catastrophe. It is clear that agencies were at work which had not been calculated for by the engineer, or subsequently recognised or detected by Mr. Lunn, the Middle Level Superintendent, or his subordinates. Certainly the water from the Ouse got round and under one of the wings and occasioned the fall, but the original plan seemed to provide against such a contingency. Perhaps it was the effect of the works connected with the Norfolk Estuary which altered the set of the tides and drove the water against the wing walls at a new and unsuspected angle. It is a fact that the alterations in the river below Lynn made the low water of ordinary spring tides about three feet lower after the year 1857 than it was previously. Perhaps the foundations of the Sluice were based upon treacherous soil. To the last-named supposition the present writer attaches much im-



BREKING OF THE MIDDLE LEVEL SLUICE, 1862.



COFFER DAM IN MIDDLE LEVEL.

To show how it was built.  
Group of eminent Engineers, with Mr. Lubbock, Contractor.



GRAND SKATING MATCH ON RIVER NENE.  
showing the skaters "Turkies" Smart and George Saw  
winning a friendly match.

THE MIDDLE LEVEL INUNDATION.

A SKATING MATCH ON THE NENE.

BREAKING OF THE MIDDLE LEVEL SLUICE, 1862.

COFFER DAM IN MIDDLE LEVEL.

GRAND SKATING MATCH ON RIVER NENE

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ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

portance. There are unquestionably fresh water springs in the immediate neighbourhood, most of them having tiny underground streamlets running towards the river and carrying with them a silty deposit. This process continued from day to day for years would at last sap and destroy the foundation on which the structure, or some part of it rested, however firm it might have seemed to be in the first instance. At any rate the Jury at the Norwich Assizes, in 1863, after hearing much scientific and other evidence, gave as part of their verdict that the damage was not caused by the absence of due care and skill with respect to the making of the Sluice, and Mr. Lunn may be credited with a truthful statement when he deposed that it was impossible to speak with certainty as to the cause of the accident. Indications, or symptoms, had appeared from time to time, showing that all was not quite right, and steps were taken such as occurred to the mind of a practical and watchful engineer as the occasions arose, by filling up holes and the like to make everything secure. The precautions adopted had been apparently successful, and no alarm was felt until it was too late to prepare for the conflict. The insidious and powerful enemy attacked in force and conquered.

Mr. Herbert E. Clarke, in a volume of *Poems and Sonnets*, published recently, thus graphically pictures the desolate scene of the Fen flood of 1862, under the title of "The Broken Sluice:"—

A narrow road we travelled; on each hand  
 Lay leagues on leagues of waveless, tideless sea,  
 Mirroring grey sky, where green fields should be,  
 While sea-things floundered where the kine should stand.  
 Cottage and barn, and byre, and wheat-sown land,  
 The keen salt water held them all in fee;  
 And twice each day and irresistibly  
 The invading tide in scorn of man's command  
 Resumed their own again and grasped at more;  
 Ravaging, ruining, and making bare.  
 The Fenland was a sea without a shore  
 And Ocean's alien herds were pastured there.  
 Is it a dream? Full thirty years are o'er,  
 But Ocean roars remembrance from her lair.

In October of the same year that the Middle Level sluice gave way, the outfall sluice of the Marshland Smeeth and Fen drain, an important arterial drain running into the Ouse, about 200 yards below the Middle Level sluice, gave way in a similar manner and about 6,000 acres were again submerged. This further mishap was probably caused by the unusual quantity of water, which had passed through the sluice in drawing off the



water from the drowned lands, having weakened the foundations. The effectual measures that have been taken to provide against the recurrence of such disasters, will it is hoped, prevent such Marshland floods as those of the year 1862. But, even now, there are no "protection" sluices as in the North Level and South Holland drains, and is it not unwise to trust the safety of such large tracts of country to single sluices? In 1851, the Outfall sluice of the South Holland drain (about a mile above Sutton Bridge) collapsed when under repair, and a large tract of country was flooded for want of an inner protection sluice. Under these circumstances, the Commissioners caused "Sharpe's Bridge" about two miles from the sea sluice, to be made into a protection sluice.

Sir John Hawkshaw in a paper on the failure of the St. German's sluice, read before the Institute of Civil Engineers, in 1863, and published in its minutes, gives the following particulars of the materials used for the coffer-dam:—Timber, 90,693 cubic feet; iron,  $75\frac{1}{2}$  tons; cement, 432 casks; clunch, 2,444 tons; sacks, 36,524; syphons and metal in one syphon exclusive of pipes and connections, 36 tons; total weight of syphons, &c., 610 tons.

The following description of a sail over the drowned lands, which appeared at the time in the *Advertiser*, may be worth reproducing:—

We went down to the gate house at the road crossing the railway a few hundred yards beyond the Smeeth Road station at which point the water becomes navigable. Watford, the Wisbech boatman was there with his large boat ready to convey passengers across the flooded Marshland Fen to the Middle Level drain. Having hoisted sail, the boat flew over the water at a good pace, scudding between trees, over gravel roads, and amongst stacks and farms, the salt spray dashing over the side of the boat in a very lively style. After sailing past the Wheatsheaf, the Mission House, and other well-known land marks, we arrived in due course at the bank near the "gull" or breach in the bank which was about a hundred yards wide. The difference in the fall of the water between the Middle Level drain, and the flood upon the land, in the condition of the tides at that time was very slight, and consequently the scour was decreased. After inspecting the breach in the bank, we visited the house of Mr. Neep, where we found Mrs. Neep still holding possession against the invader, having the upper part of her "castle" in her keeping, the lower part being five feet deep in water, and presenting the appearance of a series of bath rooms. The damage to the house is considerable, but this is a secondary consideration compared with the loss occasioned to Mr. Neep by the drowning of his lands. The barns, stables, stacks and

grass keeping being under water, the stock had to be sent to a great distance to obtain keeping.

#### INDUSTRIAL AND FINE ART EXHIBITIONS.

Among the exhibitions which have been held during the last half-century, the Public Hall Exhibition, opened on March 1st, 1853 (remaining open for a month), was associated with the completion of that building in the previous November. It comprised an interesting collection of high class engravings, oil paintings, water colours, china, models, curiosities, &c., and the amount taken at the doors, £217, was applied, after payment of expenses, in meeting the amount remaining unsubscribed in shares. Probably at no time has the large room of the Public Hall presented so attractive an appearance as at this first exhibition. The well known ecclesiastical carvers, Messrs. Rattee, of Cambridge, who were at that time executing a portion of the work of the restoration of Ely Cathedral, from designs by Sir Gilbert Scott, contributed to the Wisbech Art exhibits objects prepared for fixing in that structure. A lofty oak canopy rising with crocketed finials into a spire was a striking feature. Messrs. Rattee also showed a specimen of carved alabaster work intended for the reredos of the Cathedral choir. Another peculiar feature of interest consisted in a fountain, which before the town possessed water works, was not so easily provided as now, placed in the centre of the room. It was extemporised, we believe, by the ingenuity of the late Mr. William Dawbarn, then resident in the town and a member of the committee. When the sun shone through the coloured glass of the lantern over the jet, rainbow tints lit up the hall in singular beauty, and gave a fairyland aspect as the room was entered. The nett sum, not much more than £100, was considered sadly small, considering the labour bestowed in the collecting the various objects. Had the lenders of the principal articles consented to the exhibition remaining another week, it was believed that it would have resulted in a considerably improved financial result.

Thirteen years later, on May the 7th, 1866, the Wisbech Industrial and Fine Arts Exhibition was held in the Public Hall, under the auspices of the Working Men's Institute. At the opening ceremony, Colonel the Hon. Octavius Duncombe, High Sheriff of Cambs. and Hunts., presided, and was accompanied by the Dean of Ely (Dr. Goodwin) afterwards Bishop of Carlisle, Lord George Manners, M.P., Viscount Royston, M.P., Mr. Richard Young, M.P., Canon Hopkins, and Mr. Jonathan

Peckover, President of the Institute. Dean Goodwin read an able paper entitled "High Art in Low Countries," which was afterwards printed. The High Sheriff then declared the exhibition open, and a *conversazione* took place in the evening, Dean Goodwin and Lord Royston attending. The former gave a remarkably interesting extemporised address upon the restoration of the lantern in Ely Cathedral, from the art standpoint. The first day's proceeds amounted to £100. The exhibition remained open for a month, the closing ceremony taking place on June 4th, when the list of awards of medals and certificates was read by Canon Hopkins and votes of thanks accorded to the jurors who had adjudged them. There was also a *conversazione* in the evening and the exhibition came to an end whilst a violent thunderstorm was in progress. The total receipts amounted to £324, which after payment of the necessarily heavy expenses, left a balance of eleven guineas to be handed over to the Institute. If not, financially, producing a large balance, the exhibition was an admirable one and afforded great pleasure and information to visitors.

#### NOTABLE SKATING MATCHES.

Skating is essentially a Fen pastime, and some notable matches held on Wisbech River deserve to be placed on record.

Thirty-five years ago, on the 21st February, 1855, Turkey Smart, of Welney, won his laurels on the River Nene as the champion skater of the Fens. The river had been safely frozen for, at least, a week previous, and some thousands of spectators congregated at the Horse Shoe Corner and along the river banks to see a match on a course from that point to Osborne House, measuring 1,200 yards. Turkey Smart won easily the principal prize of £10, beating Wiles, the ice being somewhat rough, although a great deal had been done to the course. A band of music played on the ice, and the weather being bright, it was quite a holiday scene. Two days before, a cricket match had been played at March on the Ballast Pits, when March scored 194 and Wisbech 76, Rhodes, one of the March team, scoring 100 not out. Upwards of 2,000 people witnessed the match, the fielding and batting being considered to be "more graceful than any cricketing on the green sward."

The grand skating match on the River Nene at Wisbech, on the 21st of January, 1891, will long be remembered by all lovers of Fen skating as a memorable day. The sight was an inspiring one to a Fenman, the frozen surface of the river flanked

on each side by the quay and bank, covered with a mass of human faces, eagerly watching the rapid and graceful movements of skaters whose family names have been famous for a generation past for their fleetness on the "pattens." Thirty-six years previously, on February 21st, 1855, Turkey Smart, now 61 years of age, had, almost over the same spot, won his laurels by beating George or "Gutta Percha" See, now 59 years old. To see the same couple, although veterans, again run a friendly match for a prize, naturally excited the enthusiasm of the spectators. The long, powerful stroke of Turkey Smart, though he did not run gracefully (stooping terribly) was brought to the minds of many by his re-appearance on the course, and also the short, rapid, "scuttling" stroke which enabled See to travel at great speed, though in less elegant style. But although the veterans awakened the most interest, the champion of 1891 (who is still the champion in 1895) carried off premier honours, and was received with much cheering, when he defeated all competitors under the time-test and won the prize in 5 mins. 3½ secs; George See being second with 5 mins. 10 1-5th secs.; Isaac See third, 5 mins. 19 2-5th secs. The bright sunshine shedding its cheery gleams over the snow not only added to the picturesqueness of the scene, but also enabled some excellent instantaneous photographs to be taken by Mr. Kennerell, photographer, and he has given permission for the one showing the champion "James Smart" winning, to be reproduced. Three days later an amateur match was decided on a similar course on the Nene, when Mr. James Aveling, of March, defeated the amateur champion Wm. Loveday, of Welney, who unfortunately fell in the deciding heat. The first prize was a tea and coffee service and the second a timepiece, L. Aveling taking third, S. M. Stanley, fourth, W. Racey, fifth, and H. B. Stanley, sixth. A hearty welcome was, in fact, given to both present and past skaters from Welney, close to their birthplace and home, and the Welney contingent demonstrated, as they have frequently done, that they are well able to defend their title to the highest skating honours.

## CHAPTER XXI.

THE FENLAND: ITS DEVELOPMENT AND THE GROWTH  
OF INDUSTRIES AROUND WISBECH.

AS flat as a pancake, has passed almost into a proverbial description of the Fenland. Instead of hill and dale, mountain and valley, one finds the most extensive plain that Great Britain can boast of, stretching from Quy, five miles east of Cambridge to Lincoln, about 73 miles in length, and from near Peterborough to Brandon, Suffolk, about 36 miles. Portions of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire, and Lincolnshire are comprised within this area of 1,300 miles, which has a beauty and attractiveness of its own. Kingsley acknowledges this when he speaks of the Fenland as possessing "a beauty as of the sea, of boundless expanse and freedom." The late Bishop of Carlisle, when Dean Goodwin, of Ely, in delivering an inaugural address at the Wisbech Industrial Exhibition some years ago, remarked that "A flat country was not without its advantages, even in respect of beautiful objects, upon which the eye can rest with pleasure, and by which the artists' eye can be educated." "The effects of sunrise and sunset," he says, "and indeed all beauties depending upon the atmosphere, are seen nowhere better than in a district like this; everyone must have been struck occasionally with the grand cloud pictures which may be seen in a country having a wide horizon; eccentric forms, Alpine snowy ranges, weasels and whales and every variety of hue."

Not only in the cloudscape but there is much in the landscape upon which the eye may rest with pleasure, especially when the fields, near to harvest time, are waving with golden corn, or the orchards are laden with inviting fruit. To some perhaps, the very name of fen may have suggested the idea of dismal swamps and marshes, productive of damp airs and depressing agues, though in reality the very districts which gave rise to such associations are amongst the most highly cultivated and well-drained in the kingdom. The air, as a natural consequence, has become pure and healthy; and agues, far from being peculiar to the Fens, are almost unknown. Little more than a hundred years ago, Lord Sandwich, the First Lord of the Admiralty in his day, in company with Lord Orford and a party of friends had a 21 days' cruise on Whittlesea Mere, the great reservoir for highland waters. They amused themselves with fishing and holding a regatta where now abundant crops are gathered in. His lordship was not complimentary to the Fen inhabitants, for we are told he reports that "there were very many old women in Upwell, Outwell and March; the sex very ugly; crops of all kinds plentiful." However wanting in gallantry this summary report may be towards the fair sex, there is little doubt that his lordship, if he had lived at the present day would have acknowledged that the race to which he referred had become well-nigh extinct and that the Fens are, on the contrary, famed for the beauty of its women. Kingsley in *Hereward the Wake* especially refers to this when he writes of the rich and delicate beauty in which the women of the Eastern Counties still surpass all other races in these isles, "added to which it may also be remarked that they are, as a rule, excellent housewives giving much attention to cleanliness and domestic comfort. Of the doughty old farmers, Kingsley affirms that the lowlander has his own strength, and his own virtues, or manfulnesses in the good old sense of the word."

The Fens have a history peculiarly their own, and these corn-producing lands, sometimes called "The Granary of England," or more recently "The Land of Goshen," are as much the product of art as in the kingdom of Holland. Even Canute, in his day, had seen the necessity of doing something in the shape of draining, for sailing across the Fens with his ships from Ramsey to Peterborough, the waves were so boisterous on Whittlesea Mere that he ordered a channel to be cut through the body of the Fen, which still goes by the name of the King's Delph. The Isle of Ely was then really an island, or

series of islands, and where many a town and village has since been built, existed but morass and water. How it won the designation of the "Camp of Refuge" has been told by Kingsley in *Hereward the Wake*, and also how Richard de Rulos commenced draining the Fens, deserving, as this writer says, the inscription to be written on his tomb, "Here lies the first of the new English, who by the inspiration of God, began to drain the Fens." For 800 years our forefathers waged war against wind and wave, and as a result, instead of mammoth and urus, stag and goat, the Fens now feed cattle more numerous than all the wild venison of the primeval jungle, and produce crops capable of nourishing a hundred times as many human beings. There is no need to recount here the oft-told tale of the discouragements and failures which surrounded a task fraught with immense difficulties, and requiring men of resource and courage to accomplish it. Some mistakes were made, as when a certain Bishop made a cut which let down upon Lynn the pent-up waters of higher morasses. On the other hand, honour must be given to Bishop Morton, who cut the leam from Guyhirn, which still bears his name.

Of the drainage levels, a few particulars were given by Mr. H. Musson, in a paper on the Fen District in the *Shepherds' Magazine* of March, 1897, which briefly summarises their area and management:—

The Middle Level was partially separated from the Bedford Level by an Act of Parliament in 1810. Other important Acts were passed in 1844 and 1848 conferring great powers for constructing works and borrowing monies, etc., and, finally, in 1862, an Act was passed under which the Middle Level was fully incorporated as a separate Commission. The area affected by this Level is estimated at 140,000 acres, with a taxable area of about 112,000 acres. A faint idea of the gigantic nature and cost of the works to drain such a large area, including the making of the main drain and the original outfall sluice between it and the River Ouse, may be gained from the fact that shortly after the Act of 1862 the debts of the Middle Level Corporation for monies borrowed on mortgage, or otherwise, stood in round figures at about £460,000, afterwards increased to £575,000 and upwards. An acreage rate, varying in amount in different divisions, is laid every year to cover maintenance of works, management, and interest, the surplus income being applied to the reduction of the debt which the Commissioners hope in time to liquidate entirely.

The North Level differs from the Middle Level inasmuch as it is nearer to the Wash and practically has the charge of the lower part of the channel of the Nene, by which its drainage waters are conveyed to the sea. It was partially separated from the Bedford Level by an

Act of Parliament in 1753. Various Acts relating to the Level and the Nene have been since passed, under one of which, in 1830, a new main drain to the River Nene, and its outfall sluice, were made, and the Commission obtained its title. Under another Act in 1857 the Level was entirely separated from the Bedford Level and a new outfall sluice was erected, with a greater width and a sill six feet lower than the previous one, by which the drainage was much improved. The drainage is natural, requiring no artificial power, and the water can be held up or let go at pleasure. The Commission was incorporated in 1881. The area drained, including some land outside the North Level proper, is about 70,000 acres; of this area about 40,000 acres are subject to direct taxation, about 10,000 acres have free drainage, and the remainder is comprised in districts whose Commissions pay fixed annual sums for the use of the drainage. Large sums have from time to time been raised and expended on the drainage and river works. In the year 1870 the total debt was over £250,000; at the present time it is below £40,000, and it is expected the district will be free from debt in a very few years. There has already been a substantial reduction in the taxation.

The South Level is the remnant of the Bedford Level, comprising an area of about 120,000 acres, with its official centre at Ely; and it drains into the River Ouse not far from the point at which the waters of the Middle Level enter; there is, therefore, at times a mighty back-water power to scour the river to the Wash, and so enabling large vessels to navigate it to the docks at King's Lynn.

In a paper on "The Fen Country," written by Mr. Robert Dawbarn, Clerk to the Middle Level Drainage Commissioners, the following description of its area is given:—

If the reader glances at the map of England he will observe on the eastern side, between the counties of Lincoln and Norfolk, a very large estuary called the Wash, into which the Ouse or Lynn river, the Nene or Wisbech river, the Witham or Boston river, and the Welland or Spalding river, with their affluents, discharge the rainfall of central and eastern counties, representing 6,000,000 acres—an exceptionally large watershed. The area of the Fen district, part of this watershed, and the subject of our enquiry, contains about 680,000 acres of the richest land in England, situated in the counties of Cambridge, Lincoln, Huntingdon, Northampton, Suffolk, and Norfolk. It is almost equal to a province, lying around the Wash in horse-shoe shape, and being from 60 to 70 miles from north to south, and from 20 to 30 miles broad. It lies opposite to north and south Holland, to which it approximates in size, and has been redeemed from desolation by similar means. There is a proverb well-known in the Netherlands to the effect, "God made the sea, man made the land." If this saying be true of Holland, which, being below the level of the ocean, depends for its very existence upon drainage and embankments, it is almost equally true of the English Fens. The Great Level could not, of course, have been drained without private enterprise and capital, for



which the country was indebted—not to any monarch or the State Exchequer, but to the noble family of Russell, the possessors of a large Fen estate at Thorney, situate between Peterborough and Wisbech. The work was commenced in 1630 by Francis, Earl of Bedford (of the family just named), and thirteen gentlemen adventurers, and completed in 1663, whereupon a body of Commissioners, called the Bedford Level Corporation, with the then Earl, afterwards Duke of Bedford as its Governor, was established by Act of Parliament (15th Charles II) to superintend and maintain the meritorious undertaking in perpetuity. The opposition to the proceedings of the early drainers was most pertinacious and of a varied character. It was natural that those who lived by fishing and fowling, by the gathering of reeds and rushes, and by the cultivation of osiers and making them into baskets and other wicker contrivances, should resent an innovation which was certain to reduce, if not destroy, their means of livelihood. Besides the legitimate settlers, there were the turbulent and marauding spirits of a stormy age, and many thieves and vagabonds, who had found shelter in the Fens from the laws which they had violated. No inducement which Vermuyden could offer in the shape of high wages would tempt these men, of either class, to work, and they preferred to employ their spare energies in destroying from time to time the channels and banks which had been constructed by others with much labour and expense and under many physical difficulties. Then there was the insular hatred of foreigners, for Vermuyden, himself no native, had to employ Dutchmen, French refugees, and other strangers. This bitter feeling was not confined to the ignorant and illiterate. Andrew Marvell's satire, written in the seventeenth century, though aimed at the Dutch, seems to point obliquely to the chief engineer of this enterprise.

Among the blind the one-eyed blinkard reigns,  
So rules among the drowned he that drains.

Besides these impediments there were others, not to be overcome by tact, the protection afforded by royal and powerful patrons, or the importation of labourers, whether prisoners of war or free. There were political convulsions, financial embarrassments, and opposition from the "know-alls" and know-nothings," who always embody their presumptuous interferences and their crass ignorances in petitions, memorials, and complaints whenever there is a scheme of this kind to the front. Cromwell has been charged with being an obstructor to the design, but recent researches have completely exonerated him. As a proof of the falseness of the charge it may be pointed out that the adventurers commenced and carried on the principal part of their work under an Act of Parliament passed during the Commonwealth. The traveller by rail to Wisbech, *via* Ely, will pass over two large parallel drains twenty miles long, respectively called the Hundred Feet and the Old Bedford River, with important barrier banks of the class already referred to. Between these two banks, which are about half a mile apart, lies a tract of land often covered with high-land water, to a greater or less extent. This is one of the bedding grounds

provided by Vermuyden's plan for the accommodation of surplus floods, until they can get away in the droughts of summer through the regular channels. In the dry season the tract, improved by the deposit of soil brought down from the Huntingdonshire hills, forms an excellent pasturage for numerous cattle. When covered with ice in winter it forms an excellent, unbroken, and extensive area for swift-flying skaters, whose skill and endurance are proverbial.

The Fenland is still intersected by ditches and drains, in which linger the rustling reeds and nodding sedges, once the home of the teal, widgeon, wild duck, and other prey of the fowler. There are remains of Roman banks and mounds, old barrows mostly of the long type, and ancient pottery and weapons have been discovered, and may be seen in the Museum. On some rising grounds—perhaps islands in the old meres—are churches whose richness of detail is unsurpassed, "epics in stone, the poetry of architecture in its purest age," as the British Archæological Association denominated them. It is surprising that such splendid churches are to be found in almost every village, and in an agricultural area comprised within a few miles of Wisbech. A more extended reference to these will be found in the next chapter.

Wicken Fen seems to be the last citadel of the natural marsh-land, where, formerly, in the words of Canon Kingsley, "dark green alders and pale green reeds stretched for miles round the broad lagoon, where the coot clanked and the bittern boomed, and the sedge bird, not content with its own sweet song, mocked the notes of all the birds around; while high overhead hung, motionless, hawk beyond hawk, buzzard beyond buzzard, kite beyond kite, as far as the eye could see. Far off, upon the silver mere, would rise a puff of smoke from a punt invisible from its flatness and its white paint. Then down the wind came the boom of the great stanchion-gun; and after that sound, another sound, louder as it neared—a cry as of all the bells of Cambridge and all the hounds of Cottesmore; and overhead rushed the skim of terrified wild fowl, screaming, piping, clacking, croaking, filling the air with the hoarse rattle of their wings, while clear above all sounded the wild whistle of the curlew, and the trumpet note of the great wild swan. They are all gone now!"

Since the great sea-walls known as the Roman banks, were constructed, a hundred square miles of land have been gradually recovered from the Wash, and it is affirmed that if Sir John Rennie's plan of 1839 for expediting this reclaiming process of Nature had been carried into effect, not only would the drainage

of the Fenland have been greatly improved, but a new county—to have been called Victoria County—would, by this time, have become fit for embanking, and worth some £50 per acre. His proposal was to train the four great rivers of the Fenland into one outfall, and to reclaim 900,000 acres of land, at an estimated cost of three million pounds. The steady silting-up of the Wash, which is always in progress by the natural warping up of the deposits brought down by the contributing rivers, arises from the disintegration of the boulder clay and gravels of the Yorkshire coast, which is born southwards until arrested by the south bank of the Wash. Mr. Skertchley, in *The Fenland Past and Present*, estimates this annual growth of the shore at 1·83 feet on the East Holland of Lincolnshire coast; 10·73 feet at the base of the Wash between the Welland and the Ouse; and 0·66 feet on the Norfolk coast. When the tide turns and where the river water checks the advance of that from the sea, the matters held in suspension fall to the bottom. The samphire begins to cover it as soon as it reaches the level of the tide, and by the time it has risen about two feet above the mean level, it is covered with verdure, is then called green marsh, and is fit for permanent embankment and reclamation.

Regarding the enclosure of land below Wisbech, Mr. J. T. Marshall, of Tydd Gote, writes:—

About 6,000 acres of land have been enclosed from the sea between the Nene and the Ouse, below Wisbech and near Lynn, within memory; commencing with the Eau Brink Cut, a little above Lynn, in 1821, and the Nene Outfall, near Sutton Bridge, in 1830. These lands have been formed by the alluvial soils of Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire, and Cambridgeshire washing down the Great Ouse, and parts of Norfolk and Suffolk by the Little Ouse; and of Northamptonshire, by the Nene, with the smaller streams, which, meeting the chalk and sand of the sea, from Flamboro' Head, and Spurn Point in Lincolnshire, and Cromer and Hunstanton in Norfolk, held in solution and suspension, formed land so quickly that when the great bank of Wingland from Sutton Bridge towards Lynn, was left open eleven months, in 1830 and 1831, for the purpose of warping the old channels and washways in Wingland proper, they actually deposited nineteen feet in the eleven months against the dam newly constructed across the lower limb of Kinderley's Cut, near the Foul Anchor, for turning the waters through the new channel. But although Nature left these lands for nothing, as it were, the expenses of embanking, draining, fencing, building (farm premises and houses), and road making on the lands have generally cost as much, and in some cases more than they were worth, though the bulk of them are of excellent quality; but the greater benefit has been to the drainage of the whole fen lands, which has been marvellous by the cuts deepening the outfalls of the rivers

and thus correcting the errors of the early drainers, who did their work in the interior and neglected the outfalls until the Kinderleys showed the way by the making of their cut near the Foul Anchor in the early and middle part of the last century, although not opened until the latter part (1777).

The agricultural depression which has lasted in a greater or less degree for a period of 16 years, has materially affected not only the rural districts, but towns, which are largely dependent upon the prosperity of the farmers. Before the Royal Commission on Agriculture, of which Mr. Wm. C. Little, Chairman of the Isle of Ely County Council was a member, Mr. Albert Pell, for many years M.P. for Leicestershire, gave evidence, in 1893, upon the causes and remedies for agricultural depression. He said:—

With respect to the duration of the depression it had lasted 14 years, originating with the bad harvest and bad prices of 1879. The effects had been most marked on arable lands, especially the clays and the poorer soils. Among the causes of depression was the lower price of certain important farm products as follows:—

	1879.	1893.	Decrease.
Wheat	43s. 10d. per qr.	31s. 4d. per qr.	11s. 6d.
Barley	34s. od. „	26s. 8d. „	7s. 4d.
Oats	21s. 9d. „	18s. 2d. „	3s. 7d.
Tithe	£111 15s. 1½d.	£74 15s. 2½d.	£34.
Wool	25s. the tod.	22s.	3s. od.
(Leicester and North).			

Butter had dropped and milk about 1½d. a gallon, but meat, poultry, cheese, and eggs had not gone down in the same proportion. Prices of artificial fertilizers as well as foreign feeding-stuffs had fallen considerably. The subjects of complaint by practical men were slow reduction of rent to tenants, also the slow drop of tithe-rent charge to owners, inequitable taxation, the introduction of contagious diseases from abroad, occasional scarcity of workmen, want of skill among workmen, high railway rates, and since 1878 a series of unfruitful years. He visited America with Mr. Clare Sewell Read as an Assistant-Commissioner for the Duke of Richmond's Commission, which reported that wheat could not be grown at a profit there and delivered here for less than 42s. a qr. He thought they put the figure a little too high, but he knew that the American farmer had no profit at present prices, and was suffering even more than the British farmer. The area of wheat growing there was less now than it had been, but he had no confidence that even now we had yet reached the bottom price. The remedies for depression in this country were, in his opinion, the occupation of the land by the owners, or failing that, the imparting to owners a personal knowledge of the methods and practice of farmers. The owners having gone through some previous academic instruction should take a part in the administration of local affairs

with the view to economy in the expenditure of public money. Among other remedies were simple living, attention to details, avoidance of non-paying crops, new methods of culture, and readiness to meet wishes and tastes of consumers. Amongst other measures that might aid agriculturalists, were the restoration of canal and water inland communication intercepted by railways, extension of telegraph offices to villages where luxuries were produced such as poultry, lamb, eggs, vegetables, and flowers, better arrangements for accurate weighing of live cattle at markets, and legislation on assessments. Rural depopulation was due in some measure to abandonment of petty village industries, such as carpentering, shoemaking, brewing, baking, tanning, brick and tile making, as well as to the universal set of population to urban centres.

Since 1893, wheat had fallen even lower than Mr. Pell's figures, the average price for 1894, compiled from Government returns being 22s. 10d. per quarter, a further fall of 8s. 6d. In contrast with this it may be noted that, in 1847, the year of the Irish famine, wheat made 110s. per quarter, and the average for May in that year was 102s. 5d., and for the whole year 60s. 9d. In the following year the price went down to 29s., and in 1854, it went up to 84s. again. From 1855, for about twenty years, good years and prosperous times made farmers and capitalists purchase lands at high prices, and, unfortunately, they mortgaged them heavily, which in the subsequent years of depression, caused partially by the railways and steamships facilitating the importation of foreign supplies at nominal rates, has brought serious loss upon those who thus embarked their capital.

In August, 1897, after depressed prices had lasted for a period of seventeen or eighteen years, a sudden reaction took place immediately before the harvests of that year owing to the diminished supplies imported into this country. The effect of the rise to 36s. and 38s. was to induce many farmers to push forward harvest work and to thrash at once in order to obtain the enhanced value. The prices, as a result, receded for a time, but in May, owing to a "corner" established by Mr. Leiter in the United States, and partially to the outbreak of war between America and Spain, prices advanced still higher, wheat ranging from 54s. to 55s., and farmers even anticipating that 60s. would be reached. Bread had also risen to 7d. and 7½d. per quartern loaf, for a short time. At the time this was written, prices were receding somewhat, although with the evident shortness of supplies and the larger requirements than usual of European countries, it is possible, that before the next harvest, prices may again advance.

During the present year (1898) it is expected that a larger breadth of wheat is under cultivation in the Eastern Counties, and if the higher prices should be maintained, a still larger area is likely in the future to be appropriated to corn growing as in former times. Forty years since, the home production of wheat amounted, in round figures, to seventeen million quarters, and only about three millions being imported, whilst now five millions quarters are grown in Great Britain and twenty-three millions imported. The organization of State Granaries for the storage of a large reserve of wheat, has been urged by some as a prudent course to adopt to prevent the possibility of famine prices in case of war or other emergency, but public opinion is evidently against the adoption of such a proposal, which is regarded as a costly and unsatisfactory expedient.

The publication in 1897 by the Duke of Bedford, of a book, of which he is the author, entitled, *The Story of a Great Agricultural Estate*, gives an insight into the actual position of the Thorney estate and its management under the direction of one of the largest landowners of the country. The volume is practically an amplification of a speech delivered by the Duke at Thorney, in which his Grace sought to show that while the circumstances of the labourer had improved, taxation, both local and imperial, had increased, and the rent had disappeared, not only at Thorney, but also from his Bedford and Buckingham estates, and that the possession of these properties involved a heavy annual loss to their owner. The Duke of Bedford writes:—

In the period 1816-95 the taxation of Thorney has amounted to the sum of £614,714, and, in addition, the Dukes of Bedford have expended £983,640 on soil, which was reclaimed by an ancestor from the inroads of the sea at a cost of £100,000. The taxation paid for eighty years has amounted to nine-tenths of the net income, and in 1895 £8,568 was paid in general taxation leaving a net deficit of £441 on the year's working. . . . Low prices, bad seasons, and a crushing weight of taxation have entirely caused rent, as understood by the political economist, to disappear from the Thorney Estate. At the same time the average net income for the past twenty years even without taking the death duties into account is only equal to 2½ per cent. interest on the capital outlay on new works. . . . As to the pleasures to be derived from the ownership of an estate like Thorney, if the reader conjures up a beautiful mansion and park, with endless game preserves he is mistaken. They do not exist. The only pleasure which I and my forefathers can have derived from Thorney, is the kindly feeling which has existed between us and our tenants and the inhabitants of Thorney town. It was no doubt a pleasure to my predecessors to evolve a pretty village out of the dreary waste of fens, to

create a charming river with well wooded banks and to make life less malarious and less miserable by a complete fresh water drainage, and sewage system, the latter worked by steam. They have their reward in the excellence of the health of Thorney, in the practical disappearance of crime, and in the extinction of pauperism. But the economic critic is right in his retort that such results do not show a pecuniary profit.

The following is the record of dates on which the earliest wheat-ears have been found in the neighbourhood of Wisbech during the last eighteen years:—

1881, June 3rd.	1887, June 13th.	1893, May 23rd.
1882, May 28th.	1888, June 11th.	1894, June 5th.
1883, June 7th.	1889, June 3rd.	1895, June 5th.
1884, June 3rd.	1890, June 6th.	1896, June 1st.
1885, June 6th.	1891, June 18th.	1897, June 10th.
1886, June 11th.	1892, June 6th.	1898, June 8th.

In the district around Wisbech there is one hopeful development which has materially relieved the want of employment for labour which undoubtedly would have resulted from the change in agriculture. The expansion of the fruit-growing industry and the extension of the cultivation of garden produce for the supply of London and provincial markets has absorbed a very large amount of labour. Messrs. T. and J. Cockett, and their successors, may be regarded as the chief pioneers, the orchard bordering on the Lynn Road and Clarkson Avenue having been in their possession nearly 100 years. Mr. John Cockett, and his two sons, Messrs. Henry and Alfred Cockett, now manage about 250 acres of planted land, including 130 acres of gooseberries with top trees, 60 acres of raspberries, and 13 acres of asparagus. Other relatives of the same name, including Mr. Thos. Cockett, Chapnel House, have also a considerable area under cultivation. Some 15 or 16 years since Mr. Richard H. Bath hired the Osborne Farm, of about 150 acres, and gradually increased his occupation to about 600 acres around Wisbech, all of which is devoted to this industry. At the present time that includes about 400 acres of raspberries and strawberries, 27 acres of currants and top trees, 40 acres of flowers, and the remainder cauliflowers and other vegetables. This requires more hands in the picking season than the locality will supply, and large numbers are therefore temporarily imported from London and elsewhere. Mr. Bath originally had an ordinary farm in Kent, with only a few acres given to the growth of fruit and market vegetables, but by degrees took to growing fruit and vegetables only. Finding that the best markets for fruit were in the Midlands and Northern Counties, he took

land at Wisbech so as to be nearer to them, and because of the suitability of the soil. The principal part consists of the Osborne Farm, though he has other farms at Leverington, West Walton, and Long Sutton. During the strawberry season it is not unusual for him to pick from 30 to 50 tons of fruit per day, from 1,000 to 1,300 women being employed, the best of whom, during the season, earn from 4s. to 5s. per day. Onions, potatoes, and bunch-greens are also grown in large quantities for the London and Manchester markets. Many acres are devoted to the growth of cauliflowers and French beans, the whole crop being reserved for Messrs. Crosse and Blackwell, of London, who select all the best, and only leave the balance for Mr. Bath to dispose of as best he may. Of the regular hands the men receive on an average for wages £1 a week, and the women 12s. a week, and about two-thirds of the hands are local people, the remainder about 300, being drawn from the East End of London. The total wages bill is now over £10,000 a year, and the labourers are treated with much fairness, so that a large percentage have been employed for several past. Pickers from London can earn from 26s. for the best hands to 20s., 15s. and 10s. to the less expert, and the six weeks' summer holiday, as the Londoners regard it, with the benefits of country air and good earnings, are looked upon by many of those who live in the close alleys of the Metropolis as an excellent health restorative. Flower cultivation has of late been adopted upon a portion of Mr. Bath's Osborne House land, Pansies and Violas being grown, of which, on one exceptional day in the spring, 120,000 plants were dispatched from the Osborne Farm. About two acres are devoted to carnations, of which some 280 varieties are grown. In fruits there were 53 acres at Osborne Farm, 35 at Walton, 36 at Leverington, and 48 at Long Sutton, making in all 194 acres. Strawberries are grown upon 251 acres, and, with raspberries, are the most important of the fruit crops grown by Mr. Bath. About forty tons of red currants, a quantity of apples, pears, plums, and damsons are also sent away from this extensive fruit and flower-growing estate near Wisbech, which may be regarded as a typical one, and as fruit-farming employs much more labour per acre than agricultural crops it has been of immense value to the neighbourhood. Some of the above facts are placed on record in the Blue Book issued by the Royal Commission on Labour, of which the Prince of Wales was a member, and which include reports from this neighbourhood. There are now probably 5,000 acres of orchard and garden land within a radius of seven miles of Wisbech. At the present time



all the cottages are so fully occupied that they are obtained with difficulty, and it seems apparent that the district may fairly vie with Kent in being called the Garden of England.

The mustard plant, both brown and white, is reared chiefly around Wisbech and the south east part of Lincolnshire, with a little in Yorkshire and Essex, and there are large quantities of the seed stored in the Wisbech granaries for the principal growers, Messrs. J. and J. Colman, of Norwich; Keen and Co., London; Finch, Rickman and Co., Sadler and Co., Champion and Co., all of London, and other manufacturers of this pungent product. The alluvial soil that favours the growth of mustard seed, as a rule, belongs to flat countries. When the crop is in bloom its golden flowers are a striking feature of a fen landscape, and one grower in 1892, near Long Sutton, boasted that he had fields of mustard seed a mile and a quarter long. Mustard was unknown on English soils 170 years ago, and when Mrs. Clements, of Durham, began to grind the minute seed, she carefully guarded the secret and obtained for some years almost a monopoly of the product. George I introduced it to the Royal table and afterwards very few could eat their beef without the Durham mustard, as it was then called. Messrs. J. and J. Colman, of Carrow Works, Norwich, are, through Messrs. Dawbarn and Sons, their agents at Wisbech, the largest buyers at the Wisbech Markets held in October, which extend over three or four Saturdays. The seeds are threshed on the farms and sent to the granaries, from whence they are dispatched in trucks to the Carrow Works. The quality of the seed is a matter of great importance, and the best samples obtainable are sought after. The seed is dried in enormous kilns, after which it is pulverised and passed through sieves of hand-woven silk, the preliminary processes applying both brown and white seed. Botanists call the mustard seeds: black *Sinapis Nigra*, and white *Sinapis Alba*, but in reality the cultivated sorts are brown and yellow. The wild "Carloch," alone is black, or nearly so; and white seed, the proper amalgamation of which provides the mustard we eat. The price is variable according to the extent of the supply, and the requirements of the manufacturers. In 1812 the seed was sold at 50s. per bushel, and £500 worth (50 coombs) were sent from Long Sutton to Wisbech in one waggon. In 1855 it ranged from 30s. to 34s. per bushel; in 1872 18s., but in 1894 it fell to 7s., without any considerable reduction in the price of the manufactured article.

The growth and preparation of woad, until recently carried on at Parson Drove, is full of interest, bringing down to modern times,

almost in its primitive state, one of our earliest manufactures, when the Briton was ranked among the less civilized nations of the earth. The ancient Briton dyed themselves with woad, making themselves of blue colour with the belief that they would be accounted more terrible to face in battle. Upon this industry of long centuries back, Miss Peckover, of Harecroft House, contributed to Mrs. Gatty's magazine for children, *Aunt Judy*, a very interesting article entitled "A Woad Mill" which appeared in a local paper on Dec. 27th, 1883, and to which we are indebted for our information. The woad mill is the property of Mr. Fitzalan Howard, J.P., formerly of Osborne House, Wisbech, and now of Spalding. The factory is said to be the only one in existence in England and the authorities at the British Museum took a great interest, some years ago, in investigating the matter. The mill is situated at Parson Drove about six miles from Wisbech, close by the church, and the collection of buildings is so curious in appearance that strangers wonder what they can be. The outside of the mill and its rude machinery no doubt present the same appearance that they have for centuries past, and possibly we have handed down to us a specimen of the original primitive architecture of the Fens. Miss Peckover writes:—"A circular thatched cone-like roof rises in the middle and two wings stretch out north and south. All round are skeleton sheds rudely framed of poles and hurdles. This is the woad mill and it is interesting as one of the few now remaining in England, the more so as the use of such a mill and the growing in fields around seems to stretch beyond the line of ancient history. All we now can trace of its story is that our English word woad comes from the old Saxon 'wad' which we in the Fens still call the plant, as our forefathers did in King Alfred's time; whilst in Germany it is 'waid,' which is doubtful but supposed to be derived from woden the Saxon god of war. Gerard, the quaint herbalist, says of woad that 'a decoction is good for wounds in bodies of strong constitution and such as are accustomed to great labour and hard, coarse, fare; it serveth also to dye and colour cloth, profitable to some few and hurtful to many.' The plant has bluish leaves, very much like a blue spinach, and persons have been found gathering it in the expectation that it was such. When in bloom the fields are of a bright yellow colour, the long ends of the erect flower stalk loosely falling on all sides producing long, flat, hanging pods of elliptical form with strong ribs along each side. The seeds are black. Botanists call the plant *Isatis Tinctoria*, and it grows with us about six feet in height. It is believed to be a native of South-

Eastern Europe. How the Britons obtained it we do not know nor how they learned to cultivate it. The young plants require careful management, as they are delicate from belonging to a warmer climate than our own; but when they are older they become more hardy. In sowing, 12 feet are allowed between each furrow, and the horses in ploughing or harrowing, are made to walk along the trenches, drawing the chained machines between them, for their tread would injure the soil, which must be kept very light."

After describing the two weedings, which have to be carefully done, Miss Peckover refers to the first plucking of the blue leaves in June, when the reapers sing their woad songs, such as :

Molly, of the woad, and I fell out,  
O what do you think it was all about?  
For she had money and I had none,  
And that is how the strife begun.

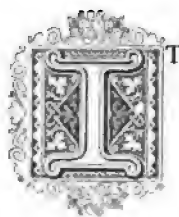
"The morning having been spent in plucking, the afternoon will be passed in balling. The mill is built with walls of sods, which are three feet thick at the bottom and narrow to the top, where they support the roof, being arranged in herring-bone pattern like the brickwork of our Saxon ancestors. The roof is made of timber and hurdles thatched with reed. The grinding wheel is in the middle building, and the pluckers empty their baskets into the centre hollow, while horses are drawing the conical crushing wheel over the leaves till they become a pulp. It is then taken and worked by hand into balls, as big as Dutch cheeses, and then left exposed to the air until they shrink to the size of large oranges. The balls are carried to the skeleton drying sheds, six or seven stories high, and there arranged on twigs of twined hazel, called fleaks, to dry. In about three months they are removed to the couching houses, where the woad lies till heated by fermentation, and worked with water becomes a sort of paste. This process occupies twenty to forty days, and as it must be done in the dark, the workers are shut in until it is finished. The scent is most unpleasant, and finally it is put into sugar hogsheads, formerly rammed down with spades and well compressed, and is then ready for market. Woad improves with keeping, and after four years possesses twice its original power. But indigo has taken its place, as 4lbs. are said to produce the same effect as 210 of the Italian pastil, the name given to the best woad paste when ready for market. So that woad is now only used for the improvement and fixing of other colours

When the land became exhausted with the crop, the machinery had to be removed, as it was necessary to crush the leaves when quite fresh. This caused great inconvenience, because the skilled woad-gatherers had to follow the mill or they would be thrown out of work. The mill at Parson Drove is not, however, likely to be moved again, and, in fact, the manufacture has been discontinued; it only remains as an interesting relic of a past industry that more modern introductions have made unprofitable to work.

At an exhibition arranged by the Natural History Society of the Wisbech Working Men's Institute, held in the same year that this paper was written (1895) the woad as prepared in balls or lumps was shown, also cloth dyed with the woad and the colours set by the same article.

The neighbourhood of Wisbech is a very fine district for bee-keepers, the fruit bloom upon thousands of acres, and the flowering seeds—coleseed, turnip, cabbage, mustard, clover, also lime-trees, and flowers, affording splendid feeding grounds for the enterprising apiarian, who is usually able to obtain, under favourable conditions, splendid stocks of rich-flavoured honey. This honey commands a good price, and is of such a quality as should usually ensure a market for it in preference to the foreign imported article.

## CHAPTER XXII.

THE MARSHLAND CHURCHES AND SOME NEIGHBOURING  
VILLAGES.

It has been said that just in proportion as we find a country lacking great natural features, so do we find that architecture there develops itself in its most majestic form, as if the very sameness and monotony of the landscape induced men to raise lofty piles and spires pointing heavenwards, thereby seeking to elevate their thoughts above the level of the plain. That fairest of all cathedrals, Milan, rises above the level of the plains of Lombardy, while around us Ely, Lincoln, Peterborough, point heavenwards above the lowlands surrounding them. Such an idea may in some measure, account for the magnificent churches to be found in Marshland, for it is obvious that one of the distinguishing features of the Marshland district between Wisbech and Lynn and also on the Norfolk and Lincolnshire side of Wisbech, is the character of its churches which are almost unsurpassed for their architectural and historic features. The erection of many of these churches was probably associated with the monastic system, the abbots and monks exercising considerable influence in the Eastern district, and sending out colonies to aid the parishioners in erecting these churches. Mr. A. Hamilton Thompson, B.A., Staff-Lecturer for the Cambridge University Extension Syndicate, when describing the Fen and Marshland Churches at the Institute Hall, Wisbech, in April, 1898, remarked :—They had no very distinct evidence of any large



Walsoken Church.



Walpole St. Peter Church.



West Walton Church.

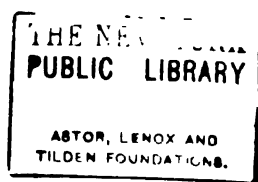
# **THE MARSHLAND CHURCHES.**

WALSOKEN CHURCH.

WALPOLE ST. PETER CHURCH.

WEST WALTON CHURCH.

*From Photos by Poulton & Son.*



monastic establishment having existed at places like Walton and Walsoken, for those churches appeared to have been largely built by the parishioners, but there was no doubt that the monks of Ramsey and Crowland, Thorney and other Abbeys must have aided them. Walpole St. Peter and Tilney All Saints were collegiate churches, and the greater part of Walton, Terrington and Walsoken churches was built by the parishioners, the question arising, however, from whence they got their material, as that part of Cambridgeshire and Norfolk was not prolific in stone. Walton Church, for instance, was built almost entirely of stone from Barnack, near Peterborough, which stone was fetched by a system of water carriage, and over a road built for the purpose. The builders of the middle ages spared no pains to make these churches magnificent, having in, a certain sense, the highest motives in view and they were also anxious to leave an enduring memorial behind of their work.

#### WALSOKEN.

The Romans were the first people to enter into a conflict with nature in the wild region of the Fens, by throwing up embankments to prevent the sea overflowing lands which gave promise of yielding considerable crops. That "vallum" or wall is still visible after the lapse of many centuries, and supplies the origin of the prefix "Val" or "Wal" in the names of Walsoken, Walpole, and Walton; Soken, in the first-named, meaning the soc or liberty, just as we speak to-day of the Soke or Liberty of Peterborough, or a place which possesses the privilege of holding a Court. Marshland comprises not only the parishes having this prefix but several others, in all, eleven parishes and seven townships being included in that area. They are as follows:—Emneth, Walsoken, West Walton, Walpole St. Peter, Walpole St. Andrew, Terrington St. Clement, Terrington St. John, Tilney All Saints, Tilney St. Lawrence, Tilney-cum-Islington, and Clenchwarton. Of these the two Walpoles form one township; the two Terringtons and also the three Tilneys. Wiggenhall St. Mary, although apparently in Marshland, because west of the Ouse, together with Wiggenhall St. Peter and Wiggenhall St. German, North and West Lynn, are included in the Freebridge Hundred of Norfolk.

The ecclesiastical history of Walsoken dates from the days of Æthelwine, who promoted the foundation of religious houses in order that Christianity might be re-established in the country. Æthelwine, or Ailwin, Duke of the East Angles, gave five hides (a hide being from 60 to 100 acres) at Walsoken to Ramsey



Abbey, and spiritual instruction was, in return, probably given to the population of Walsoken by the Ramsey monks down to the Conquest. The principal manor of Walsoken is known by the name of Popenhoe, and originally belonged to Ramsey Abbey.

The Church of All Saints, Walsoken, is perhaps the most remarkable of the Marshland Churches, comprising illustrations of different periods, commencing with the Norman about 1100 and ending with the Perpendicular about 1400. The nave is pure Norman, and is the most interesting example of the style in Norfolk next to Norwich Cathedral. A pointed chancel arch with Norman mouldings, is an interesting specimen of Transitional work, and has been given by Cotman in his etchings in detail of Norfolk antiquities. In one of the aisles, which were formerly chapels, there is a beautifully carved roof. The font is a famous example of highly decorated Perpendicular work, and was erected in 1544. Its panels represent the Crucifixion and the Seven Sacraments—Holy Baptism, Confirmation, Absolution, Holy Eucharist, Orders, Matrimony, and the Anointing of the Sick. It is ornamented with imagery work of many Saints, and round the foot of it is an inscription, which in Bloomfield's *Norfolk* is given as follows:—"Remember the soul of S. Honyter and Margaret his wife, and John Beforth, Chaplain." The fine piscina in the Lady Chapel is interesting, while the west door is a good specimen of early English work. There is a mural monument erected by Archbishop Herring, of Canterbury (who was born here in 1613 and educated at the Wisbech Grammar School), to the memory of his parents. The chancel window was inserted as a memorial to Mr. Richard Young, M.P. for Cambridgeshire, who was buried in the adjacent grave-yard. The church contains a large amount of rich wood screen-work of Perpendicular character. The old rood-screen, which is of great beauty, and is of the fifteenth century, has been removed from the chancel arch to the south chapel. The exterior presents some interesting features. The tower and spire are partly Early English and partly Decorated. There is an elegant floreated cross over the south porch, and the sanctus bell-turret remains in good order. Restoration works in this church are in progress, the roof needing repair, and other portions of the fabric falling into decay. A bazaar has recently been held to help to raise the amount required to prevent so fine an ecclesiastic edifice falling into a state of decay.

The late Mr. E. A. Freeman, a well-known authority, who made an architectural tour through Marshland, refers to the magnificent churches that he visited, and wrote respecting Wal-

soken as follows:—"The Church in its main internal features is Norman of a very high class, though no one would expect it from its external appearance. A nave of seven bays, highly enriched, a still more enriched pointed chancel arch, rising from shafts, banded over and over again, a choir with aisles and arcades continuing those of the nave, tell us what the church was originally. But the narrow aisles have given way to much broader ones, according to the ordinary parochial type of a later period; this has smothered the clerestory of the choir, which has given way to a large Perpendicular substitute. The western tower is a more congenial addition. It is a tall structure, with octagon turrets at each angle. The three tower stages are Early English, loaded with arcades, but unluckily they commence at the very bottom, and actually diminish in richness as they ascend. The west doorway is round-headed. At the top of the third stage the Early English work terminates, the belfry stage being Decorated; the architectural design is continued, the turrets being carried up and finished with pinnacles, but the ornamental system of arcading is brought to a sudden stop. A small spire rises quite unconnectedly within the battlements. Over the west arch of the nave is a curious gilded and crowned figure, said to represent King Solomon, and on either side of it is a picture representing the two women claiming the living babe. These paintings are of the Jacobean period, and it is suggested that the subject had reference to James I., sometimes called the English Solomon, possibly for his discrimination in relation to ecclesiastical matters."

The following curious epitaph in Walsoken Church can only be read with difficulty—

Man's life is like unto a winter's day,  
Some do but break their fast and go away;  
Others stay dinner, and depart full fed,  
The greatest age but sups and goes to bed.  
O reader, then, behold and see,  
As I am now, so must you be.

One acre of glebe land was added to the churchyard in 1883, and the whole placed under a Burial Board of six members. The register dates from 1558, the same date as at Wisbech.

In a lecture given by the Rev. Arthur Izard, the late vicar of St. Augustine's, early in 1896, reference was made to the Chapel and Hospital of the Holy Trinity, Walsoken, which stood at the Staith Ditch. A garden occupied by Mr. Ashton at the junction of Boyce's Lane with Norwich Road is called Staith field, and the site of the chapel is marked in an old map as in

this garden. In digging, some years ago, to plant trees, the occupier found three skeletons there. This gave rise to a story that some murders were possibly committed there, but as the bodies were found facing the east and this was the site of the old Trinity Hospital, it is probable that these bodies lay in the chapel graveyard. One of the skeletons may have been that of Thomas Martynson, of whom mention is made in Bloomfield's *Norfolk*. After referring to the custos of the Trinity Guild, a certain Eborardus, and the deed of admission into the Guild of two persons, Thos. Hutton and Ock-kys, this work notes that a certain Thomas Martynson, priest of this Hospital in 1512, wills to be buried in the chapel or chapel yard of the Hospital, as that shall please the Master. Thos. Jackson died custos in 1475. King Edward VI, when he seized the charity chapels, granted this with all lands, etc., belonging to it in Walsoken, West Walton, Wisbech, Leverington, Elme, and Emnyth, to Mary, Duchess of Richmond and Somerset. It is, consequently, surmised that Thomas Martynson's skeleton may have been thus unearthed after the lapse of nearly 400 years.

Attached to the living, which has been held since 1871 by the Rev. John Young, there are 300 acres of glebe and residence. The charities amount to £57 per annum. The Primitive Methodists have a chapel in Old Walsoken. In the reign of Edward I. there was a weekly market here on Thursdays and a fair on the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul. The manors of Walsoken, Popenhoe, Hakebeach and West Walton extend into the parish. The population of this parish has increased from 705 in 1801 to 2,771, in 1891, and the area is 4,656 acres, including a large portion of the Smeeth and Fen. The rateable value is £11,826.

The New Walsoken portion of this parish derives some benefits from its proximity to the borough of Wisbech, but local administration was not always so good as it is now in Walsoken, and there is a story told in a MS. volume written in 1789 by Mr. Mann Hutcheson, Town Bailiff of Wisbech, in that year, which contrasts the condition of affairs in this parish, a century ago, with that of to-day. The churchwardens finding that a new bell-rope in the church was required, invited some of the parishioners to assemble at a public breakfast to discuss the momentous question whether a new bell-rope should be obtained or the old one spliced. The expense of the breakfast amounted it is said, to £10, and the result of their deliberations was that it was considered desirable to have a new bell-rope at a cost of

four shillings! The accounts of these "penny wise and pound foolish" churchwardens were afterwards passed, though with much murmuring at this piece of extravagance. Whilst the transaction was fresh in the minds of the inhabitants, a travelling quack doctor got scent of it and told it to a friend named Andrew. On the itinerant doctor's exhibition of his wares on Wisbech Market Place and when commending them to his purchasers, he noticed one of the churchwardens of Walsoken close to his stage, whereupon the doctor gravely inquired of Andrew what trade he would prefer to all others. Andrew, with equal gravity, answered "I should like to be churchwarden of Walsoken, for then I could afford to spend ten pounds upon a breakfast held about a bell rope!" The churchwarden who was present, went away in a rage, and the people immensely enjoyed the quack's ready wit. If the affairs of this parish were thus managed in 1789, the same cannot now be said of its government. It enjoys some of the advantages which Wisbech possesses, from which it is only separated in one portion by the Canal and to which it is joined in another part, by the Park. The parish of Walsoken has a population of 2771, and an area of 4656 acres. It is associated with Wisbech in sanitary matters, the part adjacent to the town, called New Walsoken, being practically a suburb of Wisbech, and for Main Drainage purposes, that district is allied with Wisbech under a Main Sewerage Board, which has representatives from each parish, under the presidency of the Mayor of Wisbech. In addition, Walsoken has its own Urban District Council, of which the rector, the Rev. John Young, J.P., has been Chairman for many years, and is also its representative on the Norfolk County Council. The Wisbech Water Works Company supplies this parish, and the Lighting Company provides gas in New Walsoken, oil lamps being utilised in the more distant portions. The schools are under the control of a School Board and are efficiently managed, the standard of education and grants earned being among the highest in the district.

#### WEST WALTON.

The church at West Walton is in marked contrast to Walsoken, its condition being dilapidated and needing extensive repairs. It is a very fine specimen of Early English (13th Century) style, and one of the grandest of the Marshland churches. The detached belfry tower is some 70 feet distant from the church, on the south side. The whole fabric is spacious, the

aisles being remarkable for their great width, but there are only a small number of pews. The nave piers are exceedingly beautiful, and have detached and banded shafts of Purbeck marble. The clerestory has a splendid arcading. There are some finely-wrought capitals and niches in the choir, which exhibit in perfection all the characteristics of the style, the toothed ornament, nail head, and others. The font is of later date, but not so ornate as that of Walsoken. Near to the west end is the record of an inundation by the sea, and in the east corner of the north aisle is a monument to a Prior of Ely. With regard to the detached tower, of which there are only a few similar examples in England, Mr. Alexander Peckover told the British Archæological Society, when it visited the church, that there was a legendary story which represented Satan feeling uneasy lest this church should be built. Consequently he conceived the idea of carrying the tower away. He tried to accomplish this, but the holy nature of the place in which it stood, made him drop it by the churchyard wall, where it remains a lasting evidence of the folly and wickedness of the attempt to rob a church of its chief ornament. Mr. Bloxam's theory was that being built in a marshy country, the settlement of the tower might have endangered the stability of the church. The roof was in such decay that it would give a great deal of trouble to the restorer. Of West Walton Church, the late Mr. E. A. Freeman wrote:—"The nave and the detached campanile are each perfectly admirable in their several ways. The nave is magnificent in the extreme. The arcades are equal, perhaps superior, to Berkeley in detail. The pillars themselves, with their detached and banded shafts, may be considered preferable, and the floreated capitals, united under one large abacus, are at least, equal to their Gloucestershire rivals. In the clerestory there are no blank spaces. A string runs immediately above the tops of the arches, and the clerestory itself consists within and without of a continuous arcade, three only in each bay, the central one of each being pierced as a window. The whole interior of the nave is about the most elaborate and harmonious piece of Early Gothic work to be seen in any parish church. In point of size and ornament it surpasses many abbey churches, yet it exhibits scarcely any approximation to the character of a minster. The general plan has no transepts, no central tower. Similarly the elevation of the nave, magnificent as it is, has no triforium, no vaulting; not even a passage in the clerestory, which might have been introduced with excellent effect. Externally there is still less approximation to the cathedral

type, except in the west front, which has evidently been a very elaborate design, but which is quite ruined of late by incongruous props and insertions. A very poor western porch conceals and mutilates a superb double doorway. The chancel arch is of the same character as the nave; so also were the choir aisles, which have been unfortunately destroyed (at no recent period however) the pillars and arches still remaining visible on the walls within. The windows are mostly perpendicular insertions, with the exception of a single most elaborate two-light window of incipient geometrical work in the south aisle. There is also a very bold south porch with large arcaded turrets. The campanile is the most characteristic thing at West Walton. It forms a stately gateway to the churchyard, standing on four open arches. Its single turrets, its arcades, its immense incipient geometrical belfry window are all of the most striking character; unluckily its original finish, whatever it was, has given way to a very poor modern parapet."

At the east end of the broad south aisle, where at one time the village school was held, are fragments of an effigy in Purbeck marble of an ecclesiastic, supposed to have been the founder of the church. Originally it was in the chancel, but at the beginning of this century was discovered in the bottom of a pond, where it had probably lain for a great number of years. For a time it was placed in the church, but, afterwards, it again disappeared. About fifty years ago, part of the effigy was discovered, used as a stepping stone to a horse block, and, later on, another portion was dug out of the foundation of a cottage. A step to the chancel was found to be the missing head. Thus fragment after fragment has been found and has become an object of interest to the antiquarian. Over the bays of the nave are the symbols of the Ten Tribes of Israel, coarsely painted in large medallions, commencing on the south side with the Lion of Judah and ending on the northside with the Well and Fruitful Bough of Joseph. There is also a memorial of the devastating floods which have swept over Marshland. On a board is a quaint inscription, partly in Latin and partly in English—"To the immortal Praise of God Almighty that saveth His power in all adversities." The inscription goes on to say "Be it kept in perpetual memory that at ye First November, 1673, ye sea broke in and overflowed all Marshland to the greate danger of the men's lives and losse of men's goods." This seems to have been a third warning for the inscription records two previous floods, on "The Three and Twentieth day of March, 1614," and the other on "The Twelfth and Thirteenth of

September, 1671," when "all Marshland was again overflowed by the violence of the sea," to which is added the reflection at the foot of the tablet:

Surely our sins were tintured in grain;  
May we not say the labour was in vain;  
So many washings, still the blots remain.

Opposite the grand campanile of the church is an inn, with the sign of the "Queen of Trumps," and the following lines over the doorway are in a different vein:—

Her Majesty the Queen of Trumps doth come,  
Let the bells ring, bring trumpet and drum;  
Pull out your cash and for your liquors pay,  
A "trump" like this won't turn up every day.

The Queen of Diamonds is gaily painted above these lines. A short distance from West Walton is a large circular eminence of somewhat low elevation, having a nearly perfect circular inclosure that seems to have been a moot hill or meeting place of the inhabitants in very early times, or a refuge in the event of flood. Walton probably derives its name from the embankment or wall of the sea running through the parish, and, in the Domesday Survey it is noticed as having seven salt works or pits which were in those days common in this neighbourhood, and an important manufacture, before the Cheshire mines were worked. The Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend, who left a valuable bequest to the Wisbech Museum, was a descendant of Lord Coleraine whose ancestors held a manor in this parish of considerable extent which afterwards passed by marriage into the Townshend family.

The living of West Walton is in the gift of the Lord Chancellor. At Walton Highway there is a school church dedicated to St. Paul, built by the Rev. E. E. Blencowe. The Baptists have a chapel in this parish. The population in 1891 was 904, and the area is 5223 acres.

#### WALPOLE ST. PETER.

The Church of St. Peter, although of later date, is considered among the finer of the Marshland Churches. It is mainly in the Perpendicular style, but the tower, north porch, doorway, and some of the woodwork is of the Decorated period. The building is of about the year 1300. The south porch is a fine example of the Perpendicular style, enriched with tracery, coats of arms and niche work, the roof being elaborate. There is a fine Elizabethan font with magnificent carved oak canopy, and at the foot is the legend

"Thynk and thanke." The length of the church is 150 feet, and the chancel extends to the extreme limits of the churchyard. The altar is raised to a great height, and is approached by a flight of seven stone steps. The reason for this is seen from the outside for it covers an arched roadway which was said to have been constructed in consequence of a dispute arising between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Neither would give way, and rather than suffer defeat, the founders of the church decided to arch it over with a roof which is beautifully groined, with fine bosses. There is a similar one at Sevenoaks, in Kent, but at the west end of the church. A figure in a corner of the chancel on the outside wall has a legendary story associated with it. It is said to represent "Jack the Giant Killer," some call it Hickathrift, and two circular holes were alleged to have been caused by Satan kicking a football at him with such force as to penetrate the building. Mr. Brock, when the Archæological Association visited the church, pointed out that the tower was probably built about 1350 and it was 1450 when the work was finished. The north door was described as a magnificent piece of carved oak, and the octagonal font a fine piece of Jacobean or Elizabethan work. The screen showed that the congregations were too small for the place and it was made to divide the part used from that which was not. The parvise at the west entrance was also pointed out as deserving of admiration.

To see the Church of St. Peter at Walpole, says an archæologist, is alone worth a visit to Marshland, and the church may be regarded as the glory of the neighbouring parishes. It has been likened by one writer to a "poem in free-stone." It must have been brought from a long distance by boat along river and dyke, probably from Barnack in the neighbourhood of Stamford, at the sole cost of these Marshland folk. No one can enter the church without a feeling of reverence and awe. Mr. Beloe has said that here is a building raised by men, humble and sincere, whose motto was "Laborare est orare." These practical Marshlanders delighted in giving of their substance towards the erection of a building, the thought and inspiration embodied in which could only have come from Heaven. The names of the men who built this grand church are unknown. The late Mr. Freeman while describing it as a remarkably fine church said "it is not, however, a satisfactory whole. The magnificent nave might, for size and proportion be a western limb of a second-rate cathedral; but the aisle-less chancel, though a fine one of its kind, forms but an unworthy termination to the east, and the really beautiful

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tower at the west is thrown into insignificance. The grand nave, in my opinion, wanted a transept, a west and a central tower."

The ornamentation of the church has evidently been the subject of much thought and study. In the south part there are beautifully sculptured bosses. One is that of a female figure, behind which are angels exercising evil spirits. On other bosses are coiled up or bound figures of swine, dogs, birds of prey, representing the evil appetites of man which are to be brought into subjection before joining in the service of God. A larger boss represents a woman and child, and on the other side evil spirits are being driven into fire. A lofty carved oak screen extends across the church, and the stone stalls in the chancel with carved seats are more after the cathedral than the parochial type.

The parish of Walpole was divided in course of time, a second church being built, which was dedicated to St. Andrew. But the people of St. Andrew claim to have their original rights in St. Peter—in fact to the Vicar and inhabitants of St. Andrew belong the right side of the chancel, and to the Rector and inhabitants of St. Peter the left side. At the east end of the church is a handsome memorial window to the late Rev. Phillip Bagge, and there the figure of St. Andrew is put on the side where the parishioners of St. Andrew have rights in the chancel, and the figure of St. Peter on the side where those of St. Peter's parish have chancel rights. The Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists have chapels in this parish.

Walpole is mentioned in the Domesday Book, and formerly had eight manors. The living is in the gift of the Crown.

The population in 1891 was 1,141. Area, 6,982 acres.

#### WALPOLE ST. ANDREW.

Walpole St. Andrew has a large church originally built of brickwork (a portion of the exterior being plastered), and of stone. It has recently undergone thorough repair and restoration, and was re-opened on September 16th, 1897. The necessity of the work had been apparent for a considerable time, and through the energetic efforts of the Vicar, the Rev. Reginald Smith, M.A., the matter was taken up and completed at a total cost of about £900. The present church is thought to have been built late in the period known in architecture as Early English, and it is believed was erected about 1400. Evidences of two former churches exist, and from antiquarian discoveries made during the restoration works, this spot was, in all probability

held sacred even before the Norman Conquest. The restoration works extended over nearly six months, during which time the whole of the exterior plaster work was restored in cement, the tower brickwork was pointed, the stonework cleaned, and the roofs, spouting, and drains were all attended to. In the interior the work was done in a thorough and judicious manner. The bases of the pillars which were unsafe were all restored, whilst the new floor was laid below the bases of the columns to give a more imposing effect to the building, which was re-seated in character with the older woodwork. Other improvements were also carried out to render it a fitting place of worship. A new coloured window was placed at the end of the chancel in memory of the Vicar's father and mother. Upon the central panel is a representation of the Crucifixion, and on one side the patron saint, St. Andrew, and on the other St. Peter. The church has several interesting features. In the tower is a recluse cell, in a fine state of preservation, and the remains of the turret, formerly containing the Angelus bell, are at the east end. The basin of a Norman font, and two ancient stones, in the shape of a sarcophagus, and bearing a Saxon cross, are also about the church, the latter being found during the work of renovation. In the interior there is a splendid Perpendicular piscina, which has been renovated, and near this are two corbels, one evidently, from the outline on the wall, originally supported a figure of the Virgin and Child. At the south corner of the chancel there are unmistakable evidences of a "three decker" pulpit having once existed, whilst above can be seen the spot where the rood-loft was fixed. The architect for the restoration work was Mr. H. C. M. Hirst, A.R.T.B.A., of Bristol, and the contractors Messrs. Davis Bros., Wisbech, and Mr. J. W. Wilkinson, Elm. In addition to the renovation of the building, a new striking clock, with a large dial, has been placed in the tower, the work being carried out by Mr. J. Dann, of Wisbech. There is a Mission Church, at the Cross Keys, dedicated to S. Helen. St. Goderic, the hermit, who was said to have been born here, preached to the people in this neighbourhood, but tradition says that they did not pay much heed to his ministrations. He went three times to Rome, and is said to have mortified his body by wearing out three iron shirts ! Population, 602 ; area, 2,364 acres.

#### TERRINGTON ST. CLEMENT.

The Church of St. Clement is the largest of all the Marshland Churches and is a cruciform perpendicular building, with a

fine embattled detached tower. It is undergoing restoration, the chancel having been undertaken by Dr. Lightfoot, late Bishop of Durham in 1879. The church consists of nave, with aisles, central lantern, transepts, chancel and the detached tower. The clerestory is very lofty and light. The font is a notable feature, and there are interesting monuments. The late Mr. E. A. Freeman describes this as "another gigantic church but it approaches far nearer than any to the cathedral type, though far from the complete realization. Its nave and west front externally fully realise it. But the transepts are short, with a central tower evidently designed, but was destroyed or never completed. The distinct characteristics of a minster church are absent from the choir. The west front is of extreme splendour, and there are turrets at the extremities of the nave and aisles." The massive campanile, of later date than the church, stands very close to it, at the north-west end, but if it had been further away, as at West Walton, both campanile and church would have appeared to greater advantage. The architectural character of the building is mainly Perpendicular, but the late Dr. Seccombe discovered fragments of remains of the earlier edifice which the present one superseded. In the wall over the east end of the nave are seven canopied niches which represent, probably, the seven parishes, recognising St. Clement as the mother or principal church of Marshland. Over the ancient font is a lofty spiral cover which discloses when open, a tryptich with paintings of scenes from Gospel history and some of mystic meaning. The length of the church is 210 feet, and there are two coloured windows in memory of the wife of a former vicar of Terrington, the Rev. T. T. Upwood, and of his daughter the wife of Capt. E. M. Currie. The monumental tablets include those of Vice-Admiral W. Bentinck, and his wife, daughter of the first Earl Manvers, Henry Paget Aldenburgh Bentinck, his third son, and a grandson; also Sir Andrew Sharpe Hamond, Bart., Captain in the Royal Navy and twice M.P. for Ipswich, with the eulogium, "Brave and respected."

During the last twenty years, the restoration of this church has been undertaken at intervals, in four stages—chancel, south aisle, west, front, and north aisle. The fifth stage, the reflooring of the nave and aisles, the repairing of the damaged pillars and the cleaning of the interior was taken in hand as a memorial of the Queen's long reign. The restoration of the transepts, with new choir stalls under the lantern arcade, the restoration of the beautiful south porch and the repair of the damaged turrets and pinnacles of the church tower caused by the gales of 1895 are

works which at the time this was written were contemplated.

There are three Nonconformist chapels in the village, viz., Wesleyan, Primitive Methodist, and Free Methodist. Terrington is situate near the old Roman bank and in earlier days has been subject to inundations, one of which in 1613, reached as far as Wisbech. The Marshland Petty Sessional Division Justices sit here, at the court house, once in a fortnight, or oftener if required, to hear police cases. It has been suggested that an alternative court should be held at Walsoken to deal with cases arising in the more distant parts of the division. The population in 1801 was 824, and in 1891, 2,208. Area 9,410 acres.

#### TERRINGTON ST. JOHN.

The Church of St. John dates from 1423, and the edifice is of the Decorated style. It is of considerable size, and has a perpendicular tower at the south-west corner. There is a good west doorway and large perpendicular windows at the east and west ends. Between the tower and south aisle is a peculiar building known as the "Priest's House," and a handsome font is supposed to have been surmounted by a wood canopy. The Free Methodists have a chapel. A curious stone in the church-yard is pointed out as "Hickathrift's Candles." The population in 1891 was 604, area 2506 acres.

#### THE TILNEYS.

Tilney All Saints and Tilney St. Lawrence are nearer Lynn, the former being about four miles west of that town, and the latter six miles to the south-west and two-and-a-half miles from Terrington Station on the Lynn and Sutton Bridge branch of Mid. and G.N. Joint Railway. The "ey" termination in Tilney is derived from the Saxon *ea*, a river, the proximity to the old course of the Ouse accounting for the terminal. The Church of All Saints, built of Barnack stone, contains some fine Norman work. The Church of St. Lawrence was built in 1846 of stone and brick, in early English style. Aylmer Hall, the birth-place of the Rev. John Aylmer, D.D., tutor to Lady Grey, is now occupied by Mr. W. B. Parsons, J.P. Tilney All Saints has a Wesleyan Chapel, and Tilney St. Lawrence a Primitive Methodist Chapel.

#### CLENCHWARTON.

Is three miles west of Lynn and is the name of a station on the Mid. and G.N. Joint Railway. The Church of S. Margaret is a perpendicular edifice, and has a tower with peal of five bells.

The parish extends to the Wash, and portions of the land on the shore have been reclaimed. There are two Methodist Chapels.

#### LEVERINGTON.

Leverington possesses one of the most beautiful churches in a district abounding with such edifices. It has a well-proportioned thirteenth century tower, capped by a Decorated spire, with good gable lights. The nave is Perpendicular, and attached to it is a very beautiful Early Decorated south porch, which has recently been restored, preserving as much of the old characteristics as possible. The font is an unusually late Decorated structure, with sculpture on each of the eight sides and on the shafts. The spire lights and octagonal angle pinnacles at the summit of the tower are of the Nene Valley type. The church was extensively restored by Canon Sparkes, who died on February 8th, 1870, and was Chancellor of Ely, Rector of Leverington, and Rector of Gunthorpe, Norfolk, having been presented by his father, the Bishop of Ely, to the living of Leverington and Parson Drove in 1827. During the 43 years he held the living he received £103,845, of which sum Parson Drove paid £52,245. In addition, he had for many years a Canonry worth £800, and for 30 years the livings of Gunthorpe and Bale, near Thetford, worth £700. The two last-named livings were in his own patronage, and the *Times*, when recording his death, adds, "the other pieces of preferment were conferred upon him by his father, who did not, at all events, neglect those of his own household."

The name of this parish is supposed to have been derived from a Saxon family named Leofric, the *ing* meaning the clan or family, and the *ton*, or town, the hamlet which belonged to them. It once boasted a Town Hall, and elected an officer called a Town Bailiff, though there was no charter or legal foundation for the office. It has large charities vested in trustees, and the distributor of these was originally called the Town Bailiff. Formerly there was a decoy for catching wild ducks near the western end of the parish, which used to be particularly productive. An extensive common in this parish was enclosed by Act of Parliament in 1843, and it is now comprised in the farms contiguous to it. A slab in Leverington Church to Captain Anthony Lumpkin was said to be the Tony Lumpkin of Oliver Goldsmith's comedy, "She Stoops to Conquer," the author having written the play, it is alleged, under a mulberry tree, and in a house still existing in the village not far from the celebrated "Crackskull Common." The Roman sea embankment, about 15 feet in height, and having

a width at the base of 60 feet to 80 feet is still very perfect in places, and probably formed the western one of the old estuary of the Ouse and Nene, the former being now diverted to Lynn.

In the Decoy House, a name suggestive of the wild duck decoy which once existed here, are some curious painted panels. The house belongs to the Rev. Frederic Jackson, Vicar of Parson Drove, who is the owner of the farm, and the late Mr. Joseph Griffin resided in it for many years, the present tenant being Mr. Joseph Scrimshaw, his nephew. Mr. J. T. Marshall thus describes them:—"In one of the rooms are ten oil-painted panels, probably three centuries old, two of which are supposed to represent the decoy, but evidently have some fanciful additions. Another, apparently, shows an Egyptian pyramid, and the other seven are indescribable by the writer. The whole were evidently done by someone who had plenty of leisure (perhaps in the summer seasons when there was no work for the decoy), and were used in constructing the present house, about fifty years since, when the old roof and house collapsed. Mr. Jackson, who obtained the farm from his father, has just been at the expense of having the pictures re-varnished and surrounded by gilt mouldings."

The fine peal of bells in this church were rehung and renovated in 1871, by the late rector, the Rev. P. Carlyon and the churchwardens, Mr. Henry Sharpe, J.P. and the late Mr. F. N. Taylor. Four of the bells date from 1752, and the 4th bell has the following inscription:—

Let your notes from earth rebound,  
That Heaven may hear the joyful sound.

The first and third bells were renewed, and the clock, a large and well made piece of mechanism for the date of its erection, 1777, was thoroughly repaired, the striking power being increased.

Gorefield, part of the civil parish of Leverington, was made an ecclesiastical parish in 1870, under the Leverington Rectory Act, which provided for this and other parishes by a division of the Leverington and Newton emoluments. The church of St. Paul was erected in 1870 at a cost of £2,000, by Canon Sparkes, a former rector of Leverington, who died whilst it was in progress. It is built of flint and stone in early English style. There is a Congregational Chapel here. Population 679.

#### WISBECH ST. MARY.

Wisbech St. Mary, about two-and-a-half miles from Wisbech, is believed to have formerly been the mother church of St.

Peter's. On the death of the Rev. Henry Fardell, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners divided it from Wisbech St. Peter, and the Rev. Henry Jackson, M.A., became its first vicar. Mr. Jackson restored the chancel of the church, built a school and new vicarage, also erected a church at Murrow, which cost about £600. The Parish Church is about to undergo a general restoration. The chancel was recently restored by the owners of the great tithes. The church consists of chancel, nave, aisles, towers, and south porch, and the prevailing style of its architecture is Perpendicular Gothic of the end of the fourteenth century. The tower arch is early pointed Gothic of the end of the fourteenth century, of which style there are also traces in the moulding of the north door, and it is not improbable that the bases of the columns that divide the sides from the nave represent a church of still earlier date, possibly one of Norman times. The font is as old as any part of the church. The tower, which is embattled, is an interesting piece of ancient masonry, and contains a set of five bells. The turret of the sanctus bell, surmounted by a cross, still remains on the eastern apex of the nave. The oldest gravestone bears the date 1620, and the register goes back to 1553. The living is a Vicarage in the patronage of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, a portion of the ancient foundation of the Abbey of Ely. There is a Mission Chapel at Tholomas Drove. There are Primitive Methodist Chapels at Wisbech St. Mary and Tholomas Drove. Population, 1887; area, 9720 acres.

#### GUYHIRN.

The fragments of old church history, from Cole's MSS. chiefly, show that a fine old Gothic church, the remains of which were dug out, when obtaining the foundations of the present edifice, existed in the 13th century, but it was allowed to fall into decay. A pension was granted to the last priest of Guyhirn in connection with this ancient church, in 1553, which is supposed to have been paid out of the old Guyhirn glebe land in Wisbech Fen, near the Murrow bank. For 100 years after this, no place of worship existed in the village, until the old Chapel of Ease, still used for a Mortuary Chapel, was erected in 1660, during the Commonwealth. In 1871, a good work was set on foot for Guyhirn by the united efforts of the Bishop of Ely (Dr. Harold Browne), the Vicars of Wisbech St. Peter and Wisbech St. Mary. A new parish under the name of Guyhirn-with-Ring's-End was formed out of contiguous parts of the two parishes, having a population of about 1,100 and an endowment of about £300 per

annum with a Vicarage House, the present Vicar, the Rev. Wm. Carpenter, being appointed to its charge.

The present Gothic church, dedicated like the former one, to St. Mary Magdalene, was erected by voluntary efforts at a cost of £3,700, and consecrated by the Bishop of Ely (Dr. Woodford) in 1878. The church was designed by the late Sir G. Gilbert Scott, R.A., and consists of chancel, nave, transepts, south porch, and western turret, with three bells. The late Very Rev. Jas. F. Montgomery, D.D., Dean of Edinburgh, and the late Rev. Canon Scott, M.A., Vicar of Wisbech, were the chief founders, contributing together about £2,200 for this object. There is beside a Mission Church at Thorney Toll, where there is also a Roman Catholic Chapel, and a Wesleyan Chapel at Ring's End. A railway bridge on the G.N. and G.E. line connects Guyhirn with Ring's End, a foot bridge running alongside. Population in 1891, 1121.

#### PARSON DROVE.

The derivation of the name of this parish is to be found in the resemblance to each other of the droves of the parish of Leverington, this one where the chapel stood, being denominated Parson's Drove. There was anciently a hermitage at Trockenholt, which is mentioned in the Charter of Wulphere, King of Mercia, relating to the endowments of the monastery of Medehamstead (Peterborough), in A.D. 664, as one of the boundaries of the estate. On its site a modern farmhouse now stands. Near to it is Clow's Cross, where the Fen waters are discharged into the North Level Main Drain from the New South Eau and New Wryde, and so called because there was formerly a stone-cross, possibly intended to mark the division of the boundaries of the Counties of Lincoln and Cambridge. By a decree of Sewers, dated March 25th, 1653, Parson Drove Fen was adjudged with others to be fully drained, whereupon the Earl of Bedford took possession of the 95,000 acres awarded them, which from that time have been subject to a special tax for drainage purposes. This tax is known as the Adventurers' Tax, and these lands as Adventurers' Lands to the present day.

John Bend, of Wisbech-Murrow, yeoman, by his will dated 1593, gave certain lands for the use of the poor in Wisbech-Murrow, Tholomas Drove, and Leverington Parson-Drove. He therein declared that he had made a feoffment and willed a cottage and 16 acres in Leverington-Parson Drove for the poor of Parson Drove. This land lies in South Inham field, and with it the



public house, known as the Butcher's Arms. By the enclosure of Parson Drove Fen, an allotment of seven acres was added to the above, which with two acres of land in Leverington Marsh make 25 acres in all. A scheme was approved by the Charity Commissioners in 1873 for the administration of the above, with the rector (Rev. Frederick Jackson, M.A.), and the Vicar of Southcum-Murrow (Rev. A. W. Roper) for the time being ex-officio trustees, with others who were named. For the year ending January, 1890, after paying to eight poor persons an aggregate sum of £12 and expenses, there remained £83 12s. 8d. which was divided into three equal parts, the first being applied, in accordance with the scheme, towards promoting elementary education in Parson Drove, by grants to the School Board, and by scholarships of £5 to deserving pupils; the second to the benefit of the most deserving necessitous poor of Parson Drove; and the third to Clothing Clubs, Peterborough Infirmary, and 31 recipients of sums of money to meet emergencies.

An allusion to this place is made in the Diary of Samuel Pepys, Secretary to the Admiralty in the reign of Charles II., in the course of which he writes:—"17th September, 1663.—To Parson's Drove, a heathen place where I found my uncle and aunt Perkins and their daughter in a sad poor thatched cottage like a barne or stable, peeling of hemp, in which I did give myself good content to see their manner of preparing of hemp. I took them to our miserable inn, . . . . . and by and by, newes is brought that one of our horses is stole out of the stable, which proves to be my uncle's, at which I am inwardly glad. I mean that it was not mine; and at this we were at a great loss; and they doubting a person that lay at next door, a Londoner, some lawyer's clerk, we caused him to be secured in his bed, and care to be taken to seize the horse; and so about twelve at night or more, to bed in a cold, stony chamber, and a little after I was asleep, they waked me to tell me that the horse was found, which was good newes, and so to sleep, but was bit cruelly—and nobody else of our company, which I wonder at, by the gnatts."

The "cold stony chamber" was at the Swan Inn, and remained in existence until 1834, when the proprietor, Mr. Charles Boucher, made considerable alterations which changed this room to one of greater comfort and modern convenience. Although this may have been a faithful picture of the village, 233 years ago, the improvements that have since been made would now justify a very different description.

Changes were made by the Leverington Rectory Act, entitled "A Bill for making better provision for the cure of souls within the limits of the parish of Leverington and certain adjacent parishes, 33 and 34 Vic., 1870," to which further reference is made on page 252. By this Act, four new parishes were formed, principally out of the parish of Leverington. Leverington Parson-Drove was divided into two, Southea-cum-Murrow and Parson Drove. The Rev. F. Jackson, the curate or chaplain of the church or chapel of Parson Drove, became the first incumbent of the new parish, on which the trusts of the Parson Drove chapel land ceased and it became glebe vested in the incumbent and his successors. Mr. Jackson has actually held the living for 54 years, having been appointed in January, 1844. In the ministrations of 43 years of that period he claims never to have missed a Sunday. The registers of this typical fen parish show that only four gentlemen have held the vicarage in 200 years, a record which it would be difficult to exceed even in the most salubrious county of Great Britain.

The Church of St. John is in the Early English style, with nave, aisles, north and south porches, and an embattled tower. The great gale on the 24th March, 1895, made considerable havoc with the roof, necessitating extensive repairs, and the nave roof was raised to a sufficient pitch to open out a beautiful arch at the west end. The chancel of this church is said to have been washed down by a devastating flood, probably about 1613, and has not since been re-built. Its foundations and pavement have been found in digging graves. The communion table itself is said to have been lost at the same time, and recovered by the present Vicar, many years ago, from the kitchen of the village inn. The population in 1891 was 716; area, 3853 acres.

#### SOUTHEA-CUM-MURROW.

Southea-cum-Murrow or Murrow, is an ecclesiastical parish formed under the Leverington Rectory Act of 1870. Emmanuel Church was built in 1873, at Southea, the western end of Parson Drove, whilst the Rev. A. W. Roper was Vicar. Corpus Christi Chapel was erected in 1857, in Early English style at Murrow, during the vicarage of the Rev. Henry Jackson and at his own cost. The population in 1891 was 960.

#### THORNEY.

Thorney, in Cambridgeshire, is about seven miles from Peterborough and thirteen from Wisbech, with a station on the Mid.

and G.N. Joint line. The Manor of Thorney was acquired by Francis, Duke of Bedford, King Charles I. granting an act of incorporation to establish a weekly market and two fairs. The Thorney Lordship consists of 17,588 acres, and is owned by the Duke of Bedford, who has a shooting lodge here, which his Grace and his predecessors have occasionally visited. The whole of this parish, indeed, belongs to the Duke of Bedford, who, as well as his predecessors, have been excellent landlords, erecting for their tenants modern cottages, with gardens attached, and giving to Thorney the appearance of a model village. Allotments have also been provided which are well managed. Some interesting particulars of this estate are given by His Grace the Duke of Bedford in a book he has published, entitled *The Story of a Great Agricultural Estate*. There is a reading room in the parish with a library attached. The Abbey church was dedicated to S.S. Mary and Botolph, after its restoration by Bishop Ethelwold in 972. It has been lately restored by the Duke of Bedford, and contains some fine Perpendicular work in the west front, added to the Norman towers. There are figures of Saxon saints carved in stone over the west window, one being Tatwine, the friend of Guthlac. In 1879, the *History of Thorney Abbey* by the Rev. R. H. Warner, M.A., was published by Leach and Son, this containing the register of the French colony which settled here in the middle of the 17th century, from 1654 to 1727. Thorney Toll is about three miles east of Thorney on the Wisbech road, where a small church was erected in 1872, and also at Wrydecroft in 1865. Wryde station is about two miles east of Thorney, and French Drove is north of Wryde. The population in 1891 was 1863, and the area 17,588 acres.

#### NEWTON.

This is a picturesque village about four miles north of Wisbech. The Roman bank, along the Wash, ran close by, and ancient coins have been discovered here. The Church of St. James is of stone in the Decorated and Perpendicular styles, with aisles, west tower and spire. The south aisle is said to have been erected by Jeffrey Wantling, a Parliamentarian in Cromwell's time. The north one was probably built by the Colville family, whose ancestor, Gilbert de Colville, came over with William the Conqueror, as a Commander in his army, his name being found in the roll of Battle Abbey. The family held the Newton Manor until it was sold in 1792. The name is derived from Col-vile, the castle on the hill, *vile* meaning castle in ancient French, and only by degrees

transferring its name to the town (*ville*) which grew up around it. In 1286, Sir Roger de Colvile married Desiderata, grand-daughter of Sir Stephen de Maresco, Lord of Newton, Walsoken, and Tid St. Giles, and through her acquired Newton, which became the chief residence of the family for over 500 years. The lands lay in Newton, Tyd St. Giles (so called because the tide came in hither and from the dedication of the Church to St. Giles), Elm, Walsoken, Emneth, West Walton, and Walpole. There was a burial place of the family railed off in the church, but no monuments exist to their memory. Sir John Colvile, Governor of Wisbech Castle in 1410 was the most remarkable man of his race, and founded a college or chantry at Newton which he endowed with £40 a year. The statutes of the College, which are on vellum, are in the possession of the family, and a facsimile, with translation, is given in the "History of the Colvile Family" which Mr. A. H. Colvile presented to the Museum and Institute libraries at Wisbech. Among the illustrations in this book, which has been completed by Lady Colvile, wife of Sir Henry Colvile, K.C.M., G.C.B., is a coloured lithograph showing a portion of the window of Leverington Church representing Sir Laurence Everard and his wife, Dame Margaret, daughter of Sir John Colvile. Another unique feature of this work is the plate illustrating the Cambridgeshire Swan Marks, and showing the King's, Bishop of Ely's, and the Colvile family's mark cut in the skin of the upper mandible of the swan. A further reference to the Colvile family will be found in the latter part of the first chapter in this work, in connection with the history of Wisbech Castle. In this village there are Free Methodist and Primitive Methodist Chapels. The population in 1891 was 436, and the area is 3056 acres.

#### TYDD ST. GILES.

This, the most northern parish in Cambridgeshire, has a church dedicated to St. Giles. It is in Norman and Early English styles, dating from 12th century and its square embattled tower, containing a ring of five bells, stands about 50 feet from the body of the church at the south end. When the chancel was removed and a portion of the church taken for a chancel, in comparatively recent times, particular attention was given to discover whether the present tower was ever connected with the church, but the foundations showed no such indication. The roof has rudely carved figures of angels and saints projecting therefrom. There is a fine Decorated west window, said to be the work of Alan de Walsingham, the architect of Ely Cathedral

lantern. Nicholas Breakspear is said to have been a curate here, who for planting Christianity in Norway was made a Cardinal, and afterwards became Pope under the name Adrian IV. There is a Baptist Chapel here. At Foul Anchor there is a Mission Church. Population in 1891, 835; area, 4,991 acres.

#### TYDD ST. MARY.

Tydd St. Mary is six miles N. of Wisbech, and two miles from the station on the Mid. and Great Northern Joint Line. The church of St. Mary contains Decorated and Perpendicular work, and has the monument of a knight of the time of Richard II. There is a Mission Church at Chapelgate, and Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist Chapels are in the parish. Tydd Gote is a hamlet (partly in Tydd St. Giles, Cambs.), where is the North Level Main Drain and Sluice, constructed under the North Level Act, 1857. The derivation of the name Tydd is said to come from the Saxon Tid or tide, and gote, or gowt, to go out. Population, 837; area, 4,770 acres.

#### SUTTON BRIDGE.

Sutton Bridge, in Lincolnshire, is the lower port of Wisbech on the river Nene, about eight miles distant from Wisbech, and on the Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway. Reference will be found in the chapter commencing on page 135 of this work to the connection of Sutton Bridge with River Improvement Schemes, the failure of the Sutton Bridge Dock and the erection of the new swing bridge which has just been completed. The first bridge was erected in 1831, and the first swing bridge was built under an Act passed in 1848. The town has grown of late years, and but for the failure of its docks in 1881, it would probably have advanced much more rapidly. The church of S. Matthew is a modern erection, built of flint, with stone dressings, in early English style. There is an Institute and Reading Room, and a commodious Oddfellows' Hall has been recently built. The Wesleyans, Free Methodists and Primitive Methodists have chapels here. Central Wingland is a parish of itself on the east of the Nene, with neither a church nor a public house in it. The greater part of Wingland, by a recent Local Government Board Inquiry, has been placed in Lincolnshire, the old King John Bank being made by the award the boundary line. This decision was given in May, 1896. Population 2,184.

Sutton St. James and Sutton St. Edmunds are villages in the

neighbourhood of Long Sutton—the former with a population of 605 and the latter 645.

#### LONG SUTTON.

Sutton St. Mary, or Long Sutton, is 12 miles from Wisbech, and five miles from Holbeach, by rail, and has a station on the Spalding and Lynn branch of the G.N. Railway. By road it is only distant nine miles. The church of S. Mary is an interesting one, the tower being of the Transitional period between Early and later Early English. The nave is a fine example of Norman, surmounted by Perpendicular work. The chancel and other portions of the church belong to the Decorated style. There are Baptists, Independent, Wesleyan, and Free Methodist Chapels. The Corn Exchange, with a suite of rooms attached, is in the Market Place; there is also a Court House at which the Petty Sessions are held, and reading rooms. Population 4513.

#### EMNETH.

The church of St. Edmund is larger than most parish churches, having nave, aisles and chancel. It is a good example of Perpendicular, 15th century, and the interior effect is striking. At the east end of the south aisle is a monument to Sir Thomas Hewar, his wife and young son, with a canopy of marble, bearing the arms of Hewar and Oxburgh. This monument was erected by Nicholas Stone, master mason to James I. in 1617. Hagbeach Hall, an old building with tall chimneys and many gables, stood in this parish and belonged originally to the Peyton family. For 300 years before they acquired it, it was in the possession of the Hewar family, and is said to have been built by the Hakebeches, whose names occur in the history of the drainage of the Fens.

Hickathrift, the legendary strong man of the Fens, may be referred to here, for his memory still lingers in the Fens, whether he be a mythical hero or not. Miss P. H. Peckover, of Wisbech, possesses a chap-book entitled "A Right Pleasaunt and Famous Book of Histories collected by William Garratt, of Newcastle, 1818." This collection of rudely-printed leaflets, which were formerly sold from door to door by chapmen or pedlars, includes "The Pleasant and Delightful History of Thomas Hickathrift," which describes the birth, parentage, and education of this Fen hero, of his enormous strength, how he was engaged as a brewer's man to come to Wisbech from Setch Brewery, and encountering a giant, used the axle-tree of his dray as a weapon, also a wheel as a shield, and killed him; how, further, as the

story goes, he kicked a football so hard that the ball was never again seen, and similarly curious legends. Hickathrift Farm is still to be found in the neighbourhood of Smeeth Railway Station, and in a grass field, at the junction of four roads, a circular hollow with the marks of an entrenchment round, is called the giant's hand-basin, whilst his grave is in St. John's churchyard. Some of the Marshlanders regard the whole story of Hickathrift's encounter with the giant as allegorical, and that the giant represents the sea, the wheel and axle-tree, the weapons used for banking it out, also that the name of Hickathrift was derived from "Hitch and Thrive," that of some early encloser of the Fens who became powerful by continually "hitching" his banks further out, and reclaiming from the sea, as has been done in the Wash for some years past. In this way the wild stories which have gathered round the Fen hero and made his achievements so attractive to juvenile readers, may possibly have originated. At least it was so suggested in a lecture delivered some years ago by the late Mr. Jonathan Peckover, who accumulated much interesting information on the "Legends of the Fens and Fen Heroes." Although these tales are strange and difficult to credit, there is possibly real history of earlier events mixed with the legendary lore which has been thus handed down to succeeding generations, and kept alive by repetition until they have become permanently identified with the physical peculiarities of the locality which originated them.

The departure from the neighbourhood of some of the resident gentry left deserted the ancient halls that once were in existence in the neighbourhood. Dunton Hall, in Tydd St. Mary, the seat of the Traffords; Newton Hall, the seat of the Colvile family; Hagbeach Hall, Emneth, Sir Henry Peyton's seat; and Needham Hall, have all changed hands and been pulled down. Beaupré Hall is alone standing of the number, and of this a large portion of the older building has disappeared, though its battlemented gateway, some of its tall chimneys and ancient buttresses remain to indicate the character of the ancient Hall before Beaupré Bell suffered it to fall into decay. Some details of Beaupré Hall may be worth giving here. In visiting it from the Outwell Tramway Station, the pedestrian will notice a quaint inscription in moulded brick-work, once on Emneth Lodge, as follows,—

Then man in mirth,  
Have mercy in mind,  
For measure is treasure  
When mirth is at end.

In all probability the house was one of public entertainment for travellers, hence the couplet carved upon its front, which has been preserved on a modern cottage. The population in 1891 was 922; area 3,449 acres.

#### ELM.

The church of All Saints is of the Early English and Perpendicular periods, the tower being Early English. It has three stories and contains five bells. On the south side of the church is an Early English doorway, and on the north side a Perpendicular porch. The aisles and nave are divided by six Decorated arches on each side, above which is an elaborate Perpendicular roof of open wood-work. The church contains a number of monuments recording the interment of members of several prominent families in the neighbourhood.

The village, which is prettily wooded, is mentioned in the same early charter of King Wolfere, with Wisbech, and had then the "great river" passing round it which now runs by Lynn, and a smaller channel, known as Elm Leam, running through the village. The name may have been derived from the tree, or if the vulgar pronunciation be admitted—Ellum—the word might mean a hall or temple. In Domesday book it is called Helle. In Needham Hall, taken down in 1804, tradition says that "Oliver Cromwell lodged one night, not in a bed, but on the kitchen table, which was of oak of one solid piece." The table is still preserved. Colonel Watson, in his History, states that there was an aged person living at Elm who remembered hearing his grandfather say that, as a boy, he could recall seeing Oliver Cromwell and his Ironsides pass by the avenue leading to this hall, and that the occupier offered him his best bed. This he declined, observing that next night he should perhaps have to sleep in the open field, and therefore he chose to pass the night on the table. A six-pounder cannon ball and the remains of a bomb shell were discovered in the walls of the hall when it was pulled down. A number of Roman and other coins, as well as other remains of a past age, have been found in this parish. Waldersea is a district of 5,000 acres in the parishes of Elm and Wisbech, and is drained into the Nene by an engine of 120 horse power, situated about three miles up the South Brink. Population in 1891, 1,779; area, 11,105 acres.

Friday Bridge, in the parish of Elm, has been a separate ecclesiastical parish since 1860. The Church of St. Mark is built of bricks, with stone facings, and has a tower and spire. Some



portions of the church have recently showed serious indications of settlement at the foundation, but it is thought the measures taken have prevented any further mischief. The Wesleyans and Free Methodists have chapels here. The Tower of the Wisbech Waterworks Company is situated in this parish, and reference will be found to it on page 174. Population 1891, 616; area 4530.

Coldham, formerly known as "Pear Tree Hill," was formed as a separate ecclesiastical parish in 1874. The Church of St. Etheldreda was built in 1876 in Early English style. The east window is a memorial to Lord Overstone, formerly owner of the Coldham Hall Estate and a benefactor to the church. Population in 1891, 374; area, 4,400 acres.

#### UPWELL.

Upwell is connected with Wisbech by a steam tramway opened in 1884, which runs from the Great Eastern Station (to which Company it belongs) to beyond Upwell Church. The church of St. Peter which is in Norfolk, is a large and fine edifice, consisting of a nave of six bays, with north and south aisles and a chancel of good proportions. It has a fine carved oak roof and a beautiful east window, consisting of three lights, the central compartment being a copy of Guiseppe Ribera's celebrated painting of the "Deposition from the Cross," the original of which is in the chapel of San Martino at Naples. The two side compartments are also copies of famous pictures. The church was restored at a cost of several thousand pounds, by Mr. Richard Greaves Townley, patron, and the interior is remarkably imposing. The living is in the gift of the Townley family and is one of the richest in the kingdom.

The Baptists, Wesleyans, and Primitive Methodists have Chapels. A Public Hall, to seat 500 persons, belongs to a Limited Liability Company. Nordelph, Three Holes, Lake's End, Christchurch (with a church that will seat 400), Tip's End, &c., are all included in Upwell parish.

The benefactions include five alms-houses, about 20 acres of land and the rent of four messuages, as well as bequests amounting to about £35 in money. Upwell in 1202 is said to have had a Market-place and a weekly market. There was a priory of Gilbertines, being a cell to Sempringham founded in King John's reign. Marmound Priory was endowed by Richard I with 300 acres in Upwell and Outwell, to support the prayers of three priests, and it continued until the dissolution of the monasteries. Upwell with Outwell, forms one continuous village or street about



**CHURCHES OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.**

LEVERINGTON CHURCH      UPWELL CHURCH      OUTWELL CHURCH.

*From Photos by Poulton & Son.*

THE NEW  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

four miles long, with the old Nene, which is navigable, running through those places. The cultivation of hemp and flax is referred to in an order of Sessions of Sewers held at Wisbech in 1340, in the reign of Edward III. The district is now largely a fruit-growing one, and potatoes are also extensively cultivated. Population in 1891, 3494; in Cambridgeshire, 1387; in Norfolk, 2107; area 16,454 acres.

Concerning "the Wells" (as Upwell, Outwell, and Welney are sometimes locally called) there is an old triplet, which says that there are:—

Outwell, Upwell, Well, and Welney,  
But of all the four Wells, there are only three.  
That is Outwell, Upwell, and Welney.

The fact is there is no such a place as "Well," although it is fair to assume there once was, from which the present places derived their names. Some historians state there was a "Welle" Priory established in the time of Richard I. in the latter part of the 12th century, but nothing of it remains in the 19th century. Although there are only three "Wells" there are five parishes, viz.:—Outwell (Isle), Outwell (Norfolk), Upwell (Isle), Upwell (Norfolk), and Welney. Although all the Wells are partly in the Isle of Ely and partly in Norfolk, all the three churches (Outwell, Upwell, and Welney) are on the Norfolk side of the Well river, which is the southern branch of the ancient Nene from Peterborough by Whittlesea and Ramsey Meres and March. The greater part of the inhabitants are also in Norfolk. Welney (six miles S.S.E. of Upwell) has a church dedicated to St. Mary, and built of stone in Early English style, which takes the place of another church, of which the register dates from 1642. The Great Eastern Railway contemplate the construction of a Light Tramway between Welney and Manea. There is also Christchurch, with a modern church at Brimstone Hill,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles south of Upwell, and a Rectory; and Nordelph  $3\frac{1}{4}$  miles south-east of Outwell on the road to Downham, with a Chapel of Ease in Upwell and a curate appointed by the Upwell rector. Both the Outwells (Isle and Norfolk) and the Upwells (Isle and Norfolk) are in the Wisbech Union, and each appoints its own overseers, but for churchwardens the two Outwells unite and the two Upwells. The fifth parish, Welney, is chiefly in Norfolk and wholly in the Downham (Downham Market) Union. Can the terminal *ney* or *nee* be from *ee* a natural watercourse, or drain? Possibly the above was the name of the whole district before it

was divided into parishes. When the latter took place it is very likely *Out-well* was adopted as the outer part, *Up-well* as the upper part and *Well-see* as the Well *ee* or water course.

#### OUTWELL.

The Church of St. Clements is Perpendicular of about the 14th century. It has a fine chancel arch, and of five chapels originally belonging to the church three remain, the Lynn Chapel, the Fincham Chapel, and the Beaupré Chapel. Mullicourt Priory, of the order of St. Benedict, was in this parish, and dated back from before the Conqueror. Population in 1891, 1233; in Cambridgeshire, 351; Norfolk 882. Area, Norfolk, 2512 acres; Cambs. 552.

The Beaupré Hall Manor in Outwell, Norfolk, takes its name of *Beau-pré*, or *de Bello Prato*, from the fine meadows which surround it. It is a very ancient manor, and the family of the first of the Lords of this Manor whose name is on record—Sir Thos. de Saint Omer—is found among the eminent persons who came over with William the Conqueror, in 1066. The daughter of Sir Thomas, who lived in the reign of Henry I., married John, son of Gilbert de Beaupré, a man of considerable possessions. One of his descendants, Nicholas de Beaupré, was buried in Outwell Church. It was his grand-daughter, daughter of Edmund Beaupré, of Beaupré Hall, who married Sir Robert Bell, the earliest member of the family of any fame. Sir Robert Bell was Speaker of the House of Commons, and Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer. While at Oxford, in the summer of 1577, where he was sitting as Judge at the Assizes, he caught the gaol fever, at what was known as the "Black Assize," and died on circuit at Leominster, Herefordshire, and was buried there the same day, by his wife. He left eight children, one of whom (Mary) married at Outwell, in 1582, Sir Nicholas Le Strange, and was grandmother of the well-known writer, Sir Roger Le Strange. Sir Edmund Bell, a son of the Speaker, succeeded to Beaupré, and was M.P. for Aldborough, in Queen Elizabeth's Parliament. His son, Sir Robert Bell, Knight, lived at the Hall and was M.P. for Norfolk in 1626. Another son, Francis, married Dorothy Oxburgh, of Emneth, a grand-daughter of Sir John Peyton, of Doddington, and their second son also married a lady of the Peyton family, the daughter of Sir Algernon Peyton, of Doddington. But the most remarkable owner of Beaupré Hall was the eldest son of Francis and Dorothy Bell (née Oxburgh) who was named Beaupré Bell. He was High

Sheriff of Norfolk in 1706, and of most eccentric habits, for while he all but starved his only son, and let the Hall fall almost into ruins, he kept 500 horses wild in the Park, many of which were 30 years old, and unbroken. These horses were allowed to wander into the very entrance hall, which was then uncovered. Beaupré Bell was an antiquarian, and made considerable collections of notes respecting churches in his own and the neighbouring counties, all of which he bequeathed to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he received his education. He was buried in St. Mary's Chapel, Outwell Church, the family burying place. The son, who succeeded him, also named Beaupré Bell, died, of consumption, when about 20 years of age, on his way from Stamford to Bath, the former being a favourite residence with country gentlemen whose estates lay in the Fens. He was buried in St. Mary's Chapel, in Outwell Church, and left the reversion of the estate, after the death of his sister, then unmarried, with his books, medals, seals, and coins to Trinity College, Cambridge, but his sister subsequently marrying Mr. Wm. Greaves, of Fulbourn, the entail was cut off. The ancient hall (previous to the neglect of Beaupré Bell to keep it in repair) was a building of considerable note. In its original state, it consisted of an ancient gateway with octangular battlemented turrets (which are still left), a pedimented wing with angular buttresses running into a sort of spire, and a range of buildings extending on the other side of the gateway. A series of tall thin chimneys were the chief characteristics of the edifice, which is shown in its ancient condition in an engraving in *Watson's History of Wisbech*. Mr. Greaves, finding that it had suffered so much from dilapidations, took down a great part of it and about 1745 expended a large sum of money on its reparation. He afterwards assumed the name of Beaupré Bell and died in 1789, bequeathing his estates to his grand-nephew Richard Greaves Townley. In this way, it came into the possession of the Townley family, being the residence for many years of the Rev. Wm. Gale Townley, rector of Upwell, and chairman of the Isle of Ely Justices. In the south-west transept of Ely Cathedral, the east window was erected at the cost of the Rev. W. G. Townley as a memorial of his brother Mr. R. G. Townley, of Fulbourn, for several years one of the representatives of Cambridgeshire in Parliament. It represents the baptism of our Lord by John, after a picture by Bassano. His son succeeded him and afterwards it passed into the possession of Mr. Chas. W. Townley, for a long period Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, and the only Commoner in England, at that

time, who held a similar office. The property, after having been let for some years, was sold with the adjoining lands to Mr. W. A. Newling, J.P., of Dial House, Emneth, and Mr. Edward Newling, of New Cross. There are certain rights and privileges attached to this property, one of which is that of being allowed to take water from the adjoining canal. The Upwell and Wisbech Tramway runs along the road opposite the Hall on the further side of the Canal.

On entering the gates, with its eagles surmounting the stone supports, one is struck with the ancient ivy-covered Hall, situated among fine old trees, and surrounded by fertile meadows. The ancient gateway, with angular battlemented turrets, is a conspicuous feature, and by climbing a spiral staircase one reaches the lead covered roof, which in the usual English fashion, is covered, as well as the walls, with names of visitors scribbled or cut into some prominent place. The entrance hall is suggestive of an old baronial residence, and the windows are adorned with painted glass of ancient date, the year 1579 being incorporated with the quartered arms of Bell and Beaupré. The arms of Bell are sable, a fess ermine, between three bells argent, quartering, argent, on a bend azure, three cross-crosslets or (gold) for Beaupré. The drawing room, though more modern than the remainder, has a mantel piece, showing the arms of the Bell and Beaupré families. There are some 30 or more rooms in the house, quaint and old in their arrangement, and the corridors are almost like a labyrinth. Many of the rooms are panelled, and one especially, with double doors and windows, shows signs of the panels having been possibly used as a hiding place for valuables. Another of these panelled rooms has the reputation of being haunted, and tradition says that the bed in this room for many years was made every day, but although the room was supposed to be unoccupied, every morning the bed was found to have been slept in by someone—by whom was an impenetrable mystery. Nevertheless the servants dared not omit to make it regularly, lest its mysterious inhabitant should take to wandering about the house. It was also a superstition that any one passing the gates after midnight would see a row of carriages drawn up, with headless coachmen! These old wives' fables are probably about as true as most superstitions, and what ancient hall has not been haunted at one time or another?

There are a number of offices which show that its ancient inhabitants kept their hall well provisioned. The kitchens, larders, dairy, brewery, and store-rooms were doubtless once filled with the fat of the land, and especially in the long winters, when

communications were slow. The old dungeon, damp and dark, in the basement, also re-called days when punishment was meted out by the Lord of the Manor upon his dependents in arbitrary fashion. The whole place speaks of long centuries of manorial residence, and if the walls or hollow panels containing the secrets of the past, could reveal them, what would they not tell us of those now defunct families, the St. Omers, the Bells, the Beauprés, the Greaves, and the Townleys?

#### NORDELPH.

This hamlet is previously referred to as in the parish of Upwell, and is four miles from Downham Market, on the Well Creek, a branch of the old Nene, from Outwell. The Church of Holy Trinity is of brick in Early English style, and was erected as a Chapel of Ease in 1865. There is a Wesleyan Chapel here.

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Referring to the preference shown by Bishop Sparke for his own family, in conferring such livings as Leverington and Parson Drove, &c. (page 380) and other valuable preferments in his diocese, there is a curious story told in a book entitled, *Collections and Recollections, by One Who has Kept a Diary* (Smith, Elder and Co., 1898), as follows:—

At Ely Bishop Sparke gave so many of his best livings to his family that it was locally said that you could find your way across the Fens on a dark night by the number of little Sparkes along the road; and when this good prelate secured a residentiary Canonry for his eldest son, the event was so much a matter of course that he did not deem it worthy of special notice; but when he secured a second Canonry for his second son, he was so filled with pious gratitude that as a thank-offering he gave a ball at the Palace at Ely to all the County of Cambridge. "And I think," said Bishop Woodford, in telling me the story, "that the achievement and the way of celebrating it were equally remarkable."

Bishop Sparke was the last Bishop possessed of Palatine jurisdiction over the Isle of Ely.

NOTE.—Anyone requiring further details, or a wider range of parishes than we are able to give in this chapter, will find the *Handbook to the Fenland*, by Mr. S. H. Miller, F.R.A.S. (Leach & Son), very comprehensive and useful. The new edition of the *Book of Views of Wisbech and Neighbourhood*, containing 21 photographs, published by Gardiner & Co., gives excellent views of the churches, the district, the river Nene, and the prominent features of the "Capital" of the Fens.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

## SOME WISBECH WORTHIES OF THE PAST AND PRESENT.



DOPE has declared that "the proper study of mankind is man," and the biographies of individuals who have been identified with progressive movements of the age have often acted as an incentive to like efforts upon those who have perused them. One writer has said that a common-place form of error ascribes great and heroic qualities to mountaineers, but forgets that in the world's history, the lowlanders have had an equal record in the Temple of Fame, and have shown as great a national love of freedom as their contemporaries. It was in the Fenland that Hereward, five years after the battle of Hastings, established his Camp of Refuge, and carried on that guerilla warfare which makes his name so familiar. To come to later times, there are associated with our town and neighbourhood those who have contributed their energies and talents to advance the welfare of their country, and in fostering those capabilities for self-government of which our cities and towns preserve enduring records.

A history of the Borough of Wisbech would not be complete without a reference, however brief or inadequate, to the lives of citizens who have been identified with its fortunes. There are those who have passed beyond mortal ken. Among the famous men who have been connected with Wisbech previous to the last fifty years, are Secretary Thurloe, Cromwell's Secretary of State, who resided at Wisbech Castle; the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thos. Herring, educated at Wisbech Grammar School; Bishop Morton, a resident at Wisbech Castle; the Bishop of Kildare,

educated at the Grammar School; William Godwin,\* a native of Wisbech, author of "Caleb Williams" and other works, who married Mary Woolstonecraft (author of the "Rights of Women" and the mother of Mrs. Shelley). The biographies of most of these have already been given in previous Histories of Wisbech.

To come to more recent times, no family has been more active in the promotion of philanthropic work than that of the late Mr. Hill, who formerly resided on the South Brink, Wisbech, in the house now occupied by Mrs. J. Gardiner. Miss Octavia and Miss Felicia Hill have been and still are ardent workers, and their brother, Ald. Hill, who was Mayor of Reading a few years since, has taken a prominent part in the municipal administration of that borough. Dr. Augustus Jessop, of Scarning, Norfolk, in his collection of essays, entitled "Arcady: For Better, For Worse"; writes in appreciative terms of Miss Octavia Hill as follows:—"It is a very hopeful sign that, of all the various schemes that have been ventilated for ameliorating the conditions of the dwellings of the poor, that which has been received with most favour is the one which is associated with the name of Miss Octavia Hill. That heroic lady has done what she has done by sheer personal influence and force of character; she has worked alone and in her own way; she has been guardian and secretary, inspector and collector; above all she has been her own committee and her own board of management. The world has been ready with its homage now that success has crowned her efforts, but the value of these efforts seems to some of us to consist very much less in what may be called the bigness of the success than in this, that Miss Hill has impressed us all with the enormous importance of personality as a factor, which some reformers are too apt to leave out of account when setting themselves to solve great social problems. Those two vast machines—the State and the ratepayers—what cannot they produce between them? One thing they certainly cannot produce—another Miss Octavia Hill by the offer even of a liberal salary."

There are happily others, whom we have still with us, and whose usefulness is still prolonged, although the flight of time has

\* The following note appeared recently in a London paper:—Among the graves swept away by the passage of the Midland Railway through old St. Pancras Churchyard, is that of a native of Wisbech, William Godwin, author of "Caleb Williams," and of a book which made a still greater commotion in its time, and which led to his friendship with Shelley—"Political Justice." In the same resting place were laid the remains of his first wife, the well-known Mary Woolstonecraft, and it was while standing on this spot that Shelley first declared his love to their daughter Mary, whom he afterwards married.

necessitated a less active share being taken of the responsibilities of public duties. Upon one esteemed inhabitant of Wisbech who has lived in this town nearly all his life, a distinguished honour has been conferred by Her Majesty the Queen, which has given much satisfaction to the residents of North Cambridgeshire. When the death of Mr. Charles W. Townley, of Fulbourn Manor, created a vacancy in the Lord Lieutenancy of Cambridgeshire, the Premier of that day, the late Right Hon. William Ewart Gladstone, submitted the name of Mr. Alexander Peckover, LL.D., F.S.A., F.R.G.S., F.L.S., of Bank House, Wisbech, to Her Majesty, with the result that after some hesitation as to the compatibility of the duties of a Lord Lieutenant with the principles held by a member of the Society of Friends, Mr. Peckover's objections were fully met. The intimation of the Queen's desire to make the appointment was conveyed to Mr. Peckover, and he accepted the highest office in his native county. Mr. Peckover is, we believe, the only Commoner and Nonconformist holding a Lord Lieutenancy in England. The University of Cambridge has since conferred the honorary degree of LL.D. upon Mr. Peckover, at the same time that a like compliment was paid to H.R.H. the Duke of York, the Duke of Devonshire, the Duke of Richmond, Earl Cathcart, and other eminent scientists on the occasion of the visit of the Royal Agricultural Society to the county town. Mr. Peckover has been made a Justice of the Peace for Cambridgeshire, President of Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, and has received other marks of approval from the county of the satisfaction given by his appointment. His liberality has been increasingly extended to Wisbech institutions, which have frequently received evidences of the interest felt in them by the family to which he belongs. The North Cambs. Hospital and the Museum have each received donations of £1,000, and the former a further donation of £500 in the Diamond Jubilee Year. To the Wisbech Grammar School the Lord Lieutenant's gifts amount to about £2,500, comprising the purchase and conveyance free of cost, to the Governors, of the residence and grounds, on the South Brink, of the late Mr. George Duppa Collins. To Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, Mr. Peckover has presented gifts amounting to upwards of £3,000, including a new Operating Theatre for that institution. The Eastern Counties Asylum for Idiots and Imbeciles, at Colchester, has lately received a gift of £4,000 for the purpose of building Technical Schools, which are to be erected and named after their generous donor. Mr. Peckover has now retired from the banking firm of Gurney, Birkbeck, Peckovers, and Buxton, of

which he had been a partner for many years, and now known as Barclay and Co., Limited, as well as from the Treasurerships of the Isle of Ely County Council, Corporation of Wisbech and other bodies, and it may be hoped that he may be spared for many years to fulfil the duties attaching to other responsible positions in the county and borough to which he has been appointed. Indeed, Mr. Peckover's life (in common with the other members of his family), has been distinguished by a desire to assist and advance the interests of many religious, educational, and philanthropic institutions, chiefly in his own county and native town, but also over a much wider area. The following record of the Peckover family, taken from a work descriptive of county families (the title of which we have been unable to ascertain), may be quoted :—

Peckover, formerly Pickenhaver, and occasionally corrupted into Pettifer, is a name of uncommon occurrence, and although found scattered throughout England, probably all who now bear it had a common ancestry many centuries ago. The present branch owns kindred with none other, and simply claims descent from a certain Edmund Peckover, who, born at Charleton, in Northamptonshire, took the Parliamentary side in the Civil War, and became an active trooper in Cromwell's army. After seeing considerable service, and being desirous of visiting his relatives in Norfolk, he managed to obtain a discharge, which is in possession of the Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, one of the family. It is dated, Sixen of Auguste, 1655, and records the good service of the holder. At this period a substantial family of this name flourished in Norwich; two served as Sheriff, whilst a bust of one member, and monuments to others, may be found in the churches of this city. Some distant relationship existed between these two branches. Edmund Peckover shortly afterwards settled at Fakenham, Norfolk, and was the first of the name to join the Society of Friends. His lineal descendant, Richard Peckover, of Fakenham, married Jane Jessup, and had three sons and a daughter, viz., Joseph Peckover, of Fakenham, who died unmarried; Edmund Peckover, woolstapler and banker, of Bradford, Yorkshire, who died there unmarried; Jane Peckover, married Richard Harris, of Walworth, Surrey (issue, Richard Harris, of Walthamstow); Jonathan Peckover, born at Fakenham in 1754, settled as a banker at Wisbech in 1777, and in 1782 founded the bank recently known as that of "Gurney, Birkbeck, Peckovers, and Buxton." He married in 1787, Susannah, only daughter of William Payne, Newhill Grange, near Rotherham, who died in 1853, and Elizabeth Ecroyd, by whom he had five sons and a daughter, viz :—

Richard, died in infancy.

William Peckover, eldest surviving son, banker, Wisbech, born 12th of 11th month, 1790; died 12th of 5th month, 1877.

Joseph, died in infancy.

Daniel Peckover, woolstapler, of Bradford, born in 1798; died, unmarried, 1867.

Edmund, died in infancy.

Algernon Peckover, banker, Wisbech, born 25th of 11th month, 1803; married Priscilla, daughter of Dykes Alexander, Ipswich, having issue two sons and six daughters, viz:—

Alexander Peckover, LL.D., F.R.G.S., &c., Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, married Eliza, only surviving daughter of Joseph Sharples, of Hitchin, who died in 1862, leaving issue—Elizabeth Josephine, who married James Doyle Penrose, at Wisbech, on April 19th, 1893, and has issue two sons (Alexander Peckover Doyle and Lionel Sharples); Alexandrina; Anna Jane.

Jonathan Peckover, President of the Wisbech Working Men's Institute, born 1835; died 1882.

Six daughters—Susanna; Priscilla Hannah; Jane; Katharine Elizabeth, married Christopher Bowley, Cirencester, died in 1870  
Algerina; and Wilhelmina.

Jonathan Peckover, senior, in addition to the six sons mentioned above, had one daughter, Elizabeth Peckover, born in 1795, married John Talwin Shewell, Ipswich, and died in 1866, aged 85.

In a collection of *Testimonies concerning several Ministers of the Gospel amongst the People called Quakers*, published in London, 1760, is one regarding Katharine Peckover, who is stated to have been born about 1666, and died 1741, at her own dwelling house in Fakenham, having been minister about 46 years. She was probably a daughter-in-law of the Cromwellian soldier. In the third Chapter of this Work will be found some particulars of the valuable collection of early books and MSS. possessed by Mr. Peckover, which are an interesting feature of his residence, Bank House.\* The following further biographical details are taken from the 1898 Edition of *Who's Who*:—

Alexander Peckover, LL.D., J.P., Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, President of Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, born at Wisbech, 16th August, 1830, is directly descended from Edmund Peckover, who served in Cromwell's army, and whose landed property he possesses. Married Elizabeth, daughter of J. Sharples, Hitchin, 1858, died 1852, educated Grove House School, Tottenham. Partner many

\* To this collection an interesting addition has been made since the account referred to was printed. To obtain the first four editions of Shakespeare in folio, dated 1623, 1632, 1664, and 1686, is one aim of English or American book collectors. The Bank House Library has for some time possessed the first, second, and fourth, and recently a very fine copy of the very rare third has been added, completing the series. Most of the copies of this edition were destroyed in the great fire of 1666. Although purchased at different times, the volumes are all bound in crimson morocco by the best English binders, and whilst varying in style, group remarkably well. Such a unique set is possessed by a very small number of collectors.

years in bank of Gurney, Peckover and Co.; now retired; takes a special interest in collections of ancient MSS., early Bibles and maps, also early printed books, especially English, also in meteorology. Owns about 4,000 acres. Recreations: Chess, cricket, tennis.

The conspicuous services rendered to his native town by Mr. George Dawbarn, J.P., call for especial notice. It may be said of him as it was of Sir Christopher Wren, whose tomb in St. Paul's Cathedral bears the Latin sentence—"Si monumentum requiris circumspice" (if you would seek for his monument look around). The descriptions which are given in this work of the prominent part which Mr. Dawbarn took in originating and promoting such important schemes as the provision of a practically inexhaustible water supply, the efficient sewerage of this town and the suburb of Walsoken, the protection of the interests of the Borough in relation to the Nene Valley Works, the improvement of the lighting arrangements and the acquisition of a public Park bear testimony to his determination and foresight, and the advantages the town has derived from his efforts.\* Few towns, even of larger population, possess such advantages in the matter of water supply, sanitation, and other arrangements contributing to the health and welfare of its inhabitants. These benefits were not obtained without great difficulty, and foremost in overcoming these difficulties, Mr. Dawbarn even incurred odium and reproach, especially in sanitary matters, in committing the town to a large expenditure, of which the ultimate advantage was greatly in doubt. This determination made Mr. Dawbarn's position at one time a very difficult one, but, after the lapse of many years, the fruit of his labours are now reaped by the inhabitants, and his usefulness acknowledged. For this reason, it may be said that these improvements bear more eloquent testimony to the energy which originated and carried them out, than any words that may be written on this page. Every honour that his townsmen could confer upon him locally has been given to the pioneer of these progressive works. Mr. Dawbarn has fulfilled the duties of Mayor, Alderman and Councillor, Justice of the Peace, and is Chairman of the Lighting and Water Companies, the Public Hall Board and other bodies, besides acting as Charity Trustee, Grammar School Governor, &c. He has also taken a prominent part in political matters and questions affecting the liberties of Nonconformists, occupying the position for many years of Chairman of the Wisbech Division Liberal Association. As partner in the long-established firm of Dawbarn and Sons, Mr. Dawbarn

\* See Chapters IX. to XII.

has been identified with some postal and railway advantages obtained for the town. Advancing years have led to his retirement from that firm and from many of his more active duties, and he now resides in the handsome residence known as Bowthorpe, which he built for himself some years since.

Mr. Francis Jackson, third son of the late Rev. Jeremiah Jackson, member of the old-established firm of solicitors known as Messrs. E. F. and E. Jackson, has completed nearly sixty-three years of public service and was until recently Town Clerk of Wisbech. Mr. Jackson was appointed Clerk to the Isle of Ely Justices at Wisbech on November 4th, 1837, only a few weeks after the accession of Her Majesty to the Throne, and resigned it in December, 1895, having held that office for no less than 58 years, a circumstance commemorated in July, 1895, by the presentation to Mr. Jackson by the Justices, of his portrait, which now hangs in the magistrates' private room at the Sessions House. He has been succeeded in the office by Mr. Arthur R. Ollard, solicitor, Wisbech. Mr. Jackson still retains the office of Clerk to the Borough Justices, having succeeded Mr. W. Berridge Smith in that office on November 1st, 1845. The Town Clerkship, which Mr. Jackson has recently resigned, had been in that family for sixty years. Mr. Edward Jackson held the office for over twelve years, and on May 15th, 1847, during the Mayoralty of Ald. Stevens, his brother, Mr. Francis Jackson, was unanimously elected to succeed him. On the 21st of August, 1897, when 85 years of age, Mr. Jackson resigned the appointment, with that of the Clerkship of the Wisbech Urban District Council and of the Port Sanitary Authority, the Secretaryship of the Sub-Commissioners of Pilotage of the Port of Wisbech, the Clerkship to the Wisbech and Walsoken Local Board of Health for Main Sewerage only, and the Clerkship of the Burial Board. In severing his connection with these bodies on account of advancing age, Mr. Jackson wrote to the Mayor (Mr. Edwin B. Bellars):—"Throughout the long period which I have held these responsible positions I have invariably received the greatest consideration and courtesy at the hands of your predecessors in the Mayoralty and yourself, and from all the past and present members of the Hall." A resolution was adopted acknowledging the valuable services rendered by Mr. Jackson during the fifty years of his appointment as Town Clerk, and expressing regret that owing to increasing age and deafness he had been compelled to resign the various offices held under the Corporation. The serious illness of the

Deputy-Clerk (Mr. Robert Bennett) had added to the difficulty of carrying on the duties of the Corporation, and his resignation was received at a subsequent meeting, Mr. Bennett's decease taking place later in the year. His long services to the Town Clerk and Corporation were acknowledged with similar cordiality, and at his decease, every mark of respect was paid at the funeral by the Corporation, Working Men's Institute, Wisbech Museum, and other public bodies, to the memory of a valued public servant. It should be added that Mr. Francis Jackson has out-lived the whole of those who were members of the Corporation when he first accepted the responsibility of acting as their legal adviser, and has not only guided the Council through many difficulties with legal acumen, but has witnessed important changes in the administration of the Borough. On the 10th of September, 1897, Mr. George Carrick, Clerk to the Wisbech Board of Guardians, was elected by 13 to 8 to succeed Mr. Jackson, and subsequently secured offices for his new duties at No. 1, York Row. Mr. Jackson also resigned the Clerkship of the Walsoken Local Board of Health and of the Wisbech Corn Exchange Company, to which Mr. C. E. Jackson, his son, was elected.

Another member of this long-established firm of solicitors—Mr. Edward Hugh Jackson—has been appointed Clerk of the Peace and Clerk of the County Council of the Isle of Ely, in succession to Mr. Frederick M. Metcalfe. The appointment was made in 1893, the office of Clerk of the Peace reverting to Mr. Jackson's office after an interval of some 64 years. Mr. E. H. Jackson, who became a member of the firm nearly 50 years since, succeeded his father, Mr. Edward Jackson, in July, 1870, on his retirement, in many of the important appointments held by him and has also received other appointments during the time he has assisted in directing the large practice of the firm. Among other appointments held by Mr. E. H. Jackson, in addition to that of Clerk of the Peace and Clerk to the County Council, are the Clerkship to the North Level Commissioners, Nene Outfall Commissioners, the Wisbech School Board, the Governors of the Wisbech Grammar School, and a number of other Drainage and public bodies. His son, Mr. E. Mc. D. C. Jackson, has succeeded to the Clerkship of the Marshland Smeeth and Fen Drainage Commissioners and the Wisbech Canal Company, and also to the Clerkship of the Nene Navigation Commissioners (Third Division) recently given up by Mr. Francis Jackson.



The useful career of Mr. William Digby, C.I.E., deserves mention in this chapter, especially as he is a native of Wisbech and commenced his Press training in connection with the staff of the *Isle of Ely and Wisbech Advertiser*. He was afterwards sub-editor of the *Ceylon Observer*, Colombo, and in 1877 was appointed editor of the *Madras Times*. In July of that year he began the work with which his name must always be associated—the relief of the distress occasioned by the great famine in Southern India. His letter to the *Times*, describing the appalling sufferings of the natives, created much commiseration in England, and a magnificent response was made to the appeal for help through the Mansion House Fund, Mr. Digby being appointed Honorary Secretary of the Executive and General Committees in India, for the receipt and disbursement of the £820,000 subscribed. A substantial honorarium was offered to Mr. Digby as a recognition of his services, but he declined to receive any remuneration from the charity. The members of the committees, however, at the instance of Sir W. Robinson, K.C.S.I., their Chairman, subscribed 2,745 rupees as a mark of their sense of Mr. Digby's energy and ability. A further graceful tribute came from the Viceroy of India, who obtained for Mr. Digby the rank of Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire, a distinction the more marked because he was the youngest man upon whom an Indian Order had been bestowed. In consequence of Mr. Digby's departure from India, he could not accept the offer of the Viceroy of a seat on the Famine Commission, nor the Presidency of the Municipal Council in Madras, although a movement had been set on foot to secure for him that position. Mr. Digby has since been associated with the *Liverpool and Southport Daily News* and the *Western Daily Mercury*, and received testimonials from the staffs of both these journals. He left Plymouth in 1882 to undertake the organization of the National Liberal Club, which has grown with such rapidity. Mr. Digby has twice contested constituencies with a view to entering Parliament, but has not been successful at present. He is the author of several works, including *The Famine Campaign in Southern India*, two volumes; *Forty Years of Official and Un-Official Life in a Crown Colony*; *India for the Indians*, and other works which have been favourably noticed. Mr. Digby is now a member of the firm of Wm. Hutchinson and Co., Northumberland Avenue, London, and has important Indian and Colonial connections, which keep him in touch with those portions of the British Empire, where he has achieved distinction.

Appended are a few brief notes of the more prominent "men of light and leading" associated with Wisbech during the last fifty years, the order in which they are placed coinciding with the date of their decease:—

THOMAS CLARKSON, Playford Hall, Ipswich, died on September 26th, 1846, in his 86th year. Wisbech has the honour of being the birth-place of this distinguished man, one of the earliest leaders of the noble band of abolitionists, whose efforts throughout the first half of the nineteenth century have brought about the emancipation of the slaves. He was born on the 28th of March, 1760, his father, an exemplary and kind-hearted clergyman, being Head Master of the Wisbech Free Grammar School. Here Clarkson received his early education, though the death of his father, when he was six years old, necessitated his mother's removal to the house in York Row, now occupied as offices by Mr. Arthur Ollard, solicitor. From thence Clarkson was sent to St. Paul's School, and subsequently to St. John's College, Cambridge, where, in 1785, he became Senior Wrangler in the University. In the previous year, he had gained the prize for the best Latin dissertation, and this success induced him to try for the prize offered by Dr. Pickard, the Vice-Chancellor, the following year, for the best essay on "Is it right to make slaves of others against their will?" Whilst gathering facts for his essay, he became intensely interested and absorbed in his subject. He wrote: "My great desire was to produce a work that should call forth a vigorous public effort to redress these wrongs of injured Africa." His essay was successful and took the prize, Clarkson being re-called to Cambridge to read it before the assembled University. On his journey back to London, on horse-back, the subject of his essay so exercised his mind, that near Wade's Mill, Hertfordshire, he dismounted from his horse, sat down by the roadside, and there and then dedicated his life to the cause of the freedom of the negro race.\* During the same year he was in search of a publisher to bring out a work descriptive of the abominations practised in this horrible traffic, when he casually met Mr. Joseph Hancock, of Wisbech, a member of the

\* About half-a-mile north of Wade's Mill, near Ware, an obelisk has been erected in commemoration of this incident, and the plinth bears the inscription:—"On the spot where stands this monument, in the month of June, 1785, Thomas Clarkson resolved to devote his life to bringing about the abolition of the Slave Trade." The late Dr. Merivale, Dean of Ely, who was present at the unveiling of the Monument, said that when quite a lad, he remembered old Mr. Clarkson taking him by the hand, pointing out this hallowed spot, and recounting the story of the crisis of his life.

Society of Friends, who asked about his essay, and took him to a publisher. The printed essay, which was published in 1786, enlarged Clarkson's circle of friends, and whilst dining with Sir Charles Middleton, Thomas Clarkson openly avowed his cheerful relinquishment of all his other prospects to devote himself to this one great object. How he redeemed this promise is a matter of history, and it is interesting to know that the box containing the varied productions of Africa and the manufactures of the natives, which articles were shown to the Privy Council in 1788, is preserved in the Wisbech Museum. Dr. Samuel Smith, in his work entitled *Self-Help*, gives a remarkable instance of Clarkson's sleuth-hound kind of perseverance. The abettors of slavery, in the course of their defence of the system, maintained that only such negroes as were captured in battle were sold as slaves, and if not so sold, then they were reserved for a still more frightful doom in their own country. Clarkson knew of the slave-hunts conducted by the slave-traders, but had no witnesses to prove it. Where was one to be found? Accidentally a gentleman whom he met on one of his journeys informed him of a young sailor, in whose company he had been about a year before, who had been actually engaged in one of such slave-hunting expeditions. The gentleman did not know his name and could but indefinitely describe his person. He did not know where he was, further than that he belonged to a ship of war in ordinary, but at what port he could not tell. With this mere glimmering of information, Clarkson determined to produce this man as a witness. He visited personally all the sea-port towns where ships in ordinary lay; boarded and examined every ship without success until he came to the very *last* port, and found the young man, his prize, in the very *last* ship that remained to be visited. The young man proved to be one of his most valuable and effective witnesses. During several years Clarkson conducted a correspondence with upwards of four hundred persons, he had some work or pamphlet to write annually to advance the cause, and he travelled more than 35,000 miles in search of evidence, performing most of these journeys in the night. He visited the docks, talked with captains and sailors, pored over customs' registers, ascertaining that the traffic was fearfully destructive to British as well as to African life, and that of the seamen that embarked in slave ships half never returned. The Society for the Abolition of Slavery had already been formed, unknown to him, to help the work of Granville Sharpe, whose mantle fell upon Clarkson, Wilberforce, and Buxton. Clarkson, when he heard of it, joined

it and prosecuted the cause with renewed vigour. Wilberforce was selected to lead in Parliament, but upon Clarkson devolved chiefly the labour of collecting and arranging the mass of evidence offered in support of abolition. All this had been to Clarkson a labour of love. It was a memorable day when on August 1st, 1834, England proclaimed the freedom of the slave. Wilberforce had died a few months previously, and Clarkson was almost totally blind. He passed through a successful operation, regained his sight, and continued his work by writing a pamphlet to the American Ministers showing the unchristian character of slavery. Clarkson's last appearance in public was at the Anti-Slavery Convention in June, 1840, at the Freemasons' Tavern, London, on which occasion he was President. Haydon, in his remarkable picture of this Congress, now preserved in Ipswich Museum\*, has represented the great man as standing addressing a few words to the assembled delegates. He afterwards retired to his residence, Playford Hall, Suffolk, and wrote a commentary of the New Testament, except the Book of Revelation. On September 26th, 1846, waking from a sleep he murmured "Come, come Beloved," and gently passed away to receive the reward of his devoted labours. He was buried in Playford churchyard, where a few friends have erected a small obelisk over his grave. In 1833 the inhabitants of Wisbech requested Clarkson to sit for his portrait, and it was hung in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall. London presented him with the freedom of the City, and placed his bust in the Guildhall. In November, 1881, the memorial erected at Wisbech to the memory of Clarkson was unveiled by the Right Hon. the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Right Hon. H. B. Brand (afterwards Viscount Hampden) thus fitly commemorating in his native town the services of a patriot concerning whom the *Times* remarked, "Clarkson was the back-bone of the anti-slavery cause, and though he might not have done without Wilberforce, certainly Wilberforce could not have done without his aid." That this estimate is a correct

\* An engraving of it is hung in the Wisbech Working Men's Institute Committee Room. In an adjoining room in the same building there is also a framed autograph letter of Thomas Clarkson, which was written when he was in his 82nd year. Apologising for the untidiness of his letter, he excuses himself by saying that he cannot see how much ink he takes in his pen, hence blots of ink, some of which remain, and others scratched out with a knife. But this, he adds to his friend, Anne Stephenson, is the last letter he will have to write; so if he is now forgiven, he will need forgiveness no more. This letter is dated Playford, May 22nd, 1841. Under a photograph of Clarkson, in the same frame, is the text, "Let us not be weary in well-doing."

one may be judged from the following letter from Clarkson, dated Playford Hall, November 25th, 1834, in which, referring to the forthcoming biography of Wilberforce by his son, he writes :—

He was greatly surprised and hurt to find that the great labour of the abolition had fallen upon me, and therefore that he had less to tell of his father than he imagined, supposing, but falsely supposing, that his father had done everything in that great question. He had imagined that his father was the author of the inquiry concerning the poor slaves, and that he had moved in it before me, if not, that he had employed me in aiding him. It could not but then put him to pain to find that I was the first person who gave birth to the inquiry, and that I first suggested it to his father, and not his father to me.

It may be added that Clarkson wrote several books, including a *Life of William Penn*, with a preface by Mr. W. E. Forster, and his work on the Slave Trade had such an effect upon Joseph Lancaster, when a boy of fourteen, that it led to his devoting his life to the education of the destitute poor, and becoming the precursor of our present system of National Education. It is interesting to note that the Lord Lieutenant (Mr. Peckover) distinctly remembers, when about five or six years of age, being taken to visit Mr. Clarkson at Playford Hall. The slave emancipator playfully tested his young visitor's precocity by asking him to decline *Musa*, which he luckily did quite correctly, and received the encouraging commendation of Clarkson.

SPELMAN SWAINE, Rear-Admiral of Her Majesty's Navy, and Chief Bailiff of the Isle of Ely, died at Wisbech on January 13th, 1848, in his 80th year. He was the second son of Spelman Swaine, of Leverington, the descendant of an ancient Dorsetshire family. Rear-Admiral Swaine was midshipman on the *Recovery* in Lord Howe's relief of Gibraltar, and accompanied Vancouver on the *Endeavour* in his voyage of discovery. He was actively engaged in the arduous boat service during that expedition on the shores of North America, and his name appears on the charts of that celebrated circumnavigator. Having completed a voyage round the world, he returned to England in September, 1795. He was afterwards Commander of the *Raven* frigate which was wrecked off Sicily in 1804. In consequence of re-arrangements at the Admiralty in 1846, and in recognition of long service, he was promoted to the high rank of Rear-Admiral on the retired list of naval officers. On the death of Col. Watson (author of *Watson's History of Wisbech*), in 1834, he was appointed by the Bishop of Ely to the ancient and honourable office of Chief Bailiff of the Isle of Ely, which he held at the time of his death. A biographer of

that day, says: "He exemplified in his retirement the sterling qualities of a gentleman and a christian. By his friends and acquaintances he was universally respected." Admiral Swaine gave several objects from N.W. America and Polynesia to the Wisbech Museum.

HUGH JACKSON, of Duddington and Wisbech, Clerk of the Peace for the Isle of Ely, died on February 11th, 1852, at the age of 80. He married the daughter of Mr. John Marshall, of Waldersea House, Elm, and left two sons, Mr. William Goddard Jackson and the Rev. J. M. Jackson, Rector of Bow Brickhill, Bucks. Mr. Jackson came to Wisbech in 1796, and entered into partnership with Mr. Maher. He was twice Town Bailiff, in 1802 and in 1815, and was Captain of the Volunteers at the time of the Battle of Waterloo.

WILLIAM STANGER, M.D., F.G.S., Surveyor General of Natal, and *ex-officio* a member of the Legislative Council of Natal, died on March 14th, 1854, at Maritzburg. He was a native of Tydd Gote. His eminent scientific attainments and medical skill secured for him an honourable part in the celebrated Niger Expedition of 1841, and he was one of the few survivors of that disastrous undertaking. The journal of Dr. McWilliam, giving the narrative of the voyage of the *Albert*, on board of which Dr. Stanger took part in the expedition, furnishes as remarkable an instance of courage and constancy of purpose as is to be found in any book of travel. Entering the Niger with a buoyant and eager crew, within one month the *Albert* returned to the sea, with the captain, officers, engineers, and crew all disabled by fever, and Dr. Stanger and Dr. McWilliam—names (says the *Examiner*) that should ever be memorable and honoured in the history of truly heroic enterprise—were compelled, in addition to nursing the sick, to navigate the vessel down the river. Dr. Stanger worked the engines day and night, and through all the horrors of such a voyage, with their friends raving and dying around them, some in the madness of fever leaping overboard, brought her in safety to the sea. The grateful remembrance of the heroism of these two doctors was handed down by the few survivors of this ill-fated enterprise in the journals and records of that day. Dr. Stanger afterwards stated that it was his belief that his own escape from the malarial fever of that region was due to the fact of his having been reared in the Fens, and that he had become acclimatized to some extent to such unhealthy surroundings, consequently he escaped the illness which disabled his comrades. Dr. Stanger preserved many relics of that expedi-

tion and of his residence in South Africa, which he presented to Wisbech Museum. His collection, consisting of about 900 specimens of fossil, minerals, and ethnological objects, after his decease, was purchased by subscription and deposited in the Museum.

REV. HENRY FARDELL, M.A., Canon of Ely and Vicar of Wisbech, held the livings of Waterbeach, near Cambridge, to which he was presented in 1822, as well as the Vicarage of Wisbech, from 1831 until March 26th, 1854, a period of 23 years, both livings being in the patronage of his father-in-law, the Bishop of Ely. He also held a Canonry in Ely Cathedral for a period of 35 years. He was joint Chairman of the Isle of Ely Quarter Sessions, taking the duties in alternation with his colleague, the Rev. W. Gale Townley, of Upwell, at Ely and Wisbech, and Mr. Fardell was also a magistrate for Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, and Lincolnshire. His death took place at his house at Ely, on March 26th, 1854, and he was buried in Ely Cathedral. In the north aisle of the choir is a Memorial Window in the Presbytery to the Rev. H. Fardell, executed by Mr. Ward, containing subjects from the Parable of the Virgins, as well as illustrations of Matt. xxv., 35, 36, "I was an hungered and ye gave me meat." An adjoining window executed by Mr. Hughes, containing subjects from the parables, is a memorial to his widow. Windows to the memory of Canon Sparke, formerly Rector of Leverington and Chancellor of the Diocese (who gave the elegant brass lectern in the Cathedral as a memorial to Mr. H. S. Le Strange, the designer and painter of the tower and nave ceilings) are also in the Presbytery. The crest of Canon Fardell is on one of the stalls on the north side of the choir. He had two sons and two daughters, and his only surviving son, Sir Thomas George Fardell, born in 1833, is M.P. for South Paddington, and Chairman of the Isle of Ely Quarter Sessions, his knighthood being one of the Diamond Jubilee Honours conferred by Her Majesty in 1897. One of his daughters was married at Wisbech to the Hon. Octavius Spencer, who died in 1896.

NEIL WALKER, joint author with Mr. Thomas Craddock, of the *History of Wisbech*, published in 1849, and a member of the Corporation after the passing of the Municipal Act of 1835. He occupied a shop as a printer and bookseller, at the foot of the old stone bridge, but it was pulled down when the Nene Valley Works were carried out. He died at Wisbech, November 15th, 1854, in a house facing the Working Men's Institute, at the age of 87.

REV. JEREMIAH JACKSON, M.A., Vicar of Elm-cum-Emneth, and 23 years Master of the Wisbech Grammar School, was 21 years President of the Literary Institute, and was presented with his portrait (by J. P. Knight, R.A.), which now hangs in the Library at the Museum, as a recognition of his abilities and valued services. He was a younger brother of Hugh Jackson, of Duddington and Wisbech, and graduated as Ninth Wrangler at Cambridge, possessing high classical attainments. He was elected Fellow of St. John's College, but was ordained and resigned his Fellowship. Whilst Curate of Uffington, he was elected Master of the Wisbech Grammar School in 1803, and afterwards added to the duties of that school the curacy of Walsoken. Resigning the school in 1826, he became Curate of Leverington, and in 1834 was appointed Vicar of Elm, where he died at the age of 82, on the 24th of September, 1857, and was buried in the churchyard of that parish. For upwards of half a century he devoted his time and talents with real advantage to the public interest. Three sons of the Rev. Jeremiah Jackson are the subject of brief notices in this and the preceding chapters. Mr. Edward Jackson, for 12 years Town Clerk of Wisbech, died in 1871; the Rev. Henry Jackson, Vicar of Wisbech St. Mary, died in 1863; and Mr. Francis Jackson, late Town Clerk of Wisbech (referred to earlier in this chapter), and another son, the Rev. Frederic Jackson, M.A., for fifty-four years Incumbent of Parson Drove, and formerly Chairman of the Court of Sewers, is still living.

HARLEY MATTHEW USILL, a member of the old Corporation, Town Bailiff in 1833, and Mayor in 1853, died on February 11th, 1862, at the age of 59. His son, a civil engineer, designed a Dock and River Improvement Scheme for Wisbech, which was promoted by Mr. William Dawbarn, aided by the Corporation, but it did not receive Parliamentary sanction.

JOHN WHITSED, M.D., was elected Alderman in 1844, and served the office of Mayor in 1845 and 1851, his name being associated with the Great Exhibition of the latter year, to which a number of articles were sent from Wisbech. He laid the foundation stones of the Crane and Warehouses on the river-side in 1845, and of the Savings Bank in 1851. He was installed the first Worshipful Master of the Good Fellowship Lodge of Freemasons, after its consecration on April 11th, 1860, and reinstalled in 1861. He died on May 8th, 1862, and was interred in the Church Cemetery.

THOMAS DAWBARN (father of Mr. George Dawbarn, J.P.),



Mayor of Wisbech during the Coronation year of Queen Victoria, also Alderman, and for some time Chairman of the Board of Guardians. His death took place on February 28th, 1863, at the age of 78.

REV. HENRY JACKSON, M.A., J.P., Vicar of Wisbech St. Mary, second son of the Rev. Jeremiah Jackson, Vicar of Elm. Formerly curate of Leverington, he was presented with a silver salver when leaving that parish to become Vicar of Wisbech St. Mary. He died on March 24th, 1863, and was buried in Elm churchyard. The Rev. H. Jackson left £150 for the erection of a drinking fountain in Wisbech, as a memorial to his father and mother, and £200 for a coloured window in Elm Church, as well as £100 for a window in Wisbech Church.

THOMAS STEED WATSON, Colville House, Town Bailiff in 1830, three times Mayor (in 1849, 1856 and 1857), retiring from the Council at the end of his Mayoralty. The present iron bridge across the Nene at Wisbech was opened when he drove over it for the first time, on the day that he was re-elected to the chair, and the Corn Exchange was completed and opened, Mr. Watson presiding at the dinner, and officially taking part in the flower show and fête that followed. It was he who once said:—

I respect the chair,  
Yet man is but man,  
Although that man is Mayor!

He came from Thorney when about 22 years old, and practised as a solicitor. Mr. Watson, towards the end of his life, built Colville House on the site of a residence formerly occupied by Mrs. Bellamy, purchased of Dr. Colville, and laid out the adjacent grounds (since converted into a building estate) making it one of the handsomest residences in the neighbourhood. In conjunction with another gentleman, he wrote a *History of Wisbech*, a thin octavo volume, published by Watts in 1834. His death took place at the age of 62, on March 16th, 1866 (the day appointed for humiliation on account of the prevalence of cattle plague in this country) and was interred in the Church Cemetery.

JOSEPH COX, J.P., for the Isle of Ely, and Chairman of the Court of Sewers, died at the age of 73, on October 5th, 1867. He was connected with the Claypons, bankers of Boston, and the gentleman to whom Mr. Cox bequeathed his property, feeling that he had enough of his own, handed it over to the Rev. Mr. Claypon, to whom it was very acceptable.

REV. CHAUNCEY HARE TOWNSEND, although not a native of

Wisbech, but an owner of property in the neighbourhood, has earned the gratitude of its citizens by the valuable gift he bequeathed to the Wisbech Museum. His death took place at Norfolk Street, Park Lane, on the 25th day of February, 1868, at the age of 70 years, and he was buried at Godalming, Surrey. Mr. Townshend was born at Busbridge, Surrey, in 1798, and educated at Eton and Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where he became M.A. in 1824. The Mayor (Mr. William Gay) received a letter from Mr. Edward Jackson, in March, 1868, intimating that in testimony of his regard for the town of Wisbech and neighbourhood, the Rev. C. H. Townshend had left a valuable bequest of books, coins, precious stones, curiosities, *objets d'art*, paintings, &c. His pictures, engravings, and some specified objects of great value, were bequeathed to the South Kensington Museum, and the remainder to Wisbech. The residue of his personal estate was devoted to founding a school in or near London, for educational purposes, for the humblest classes. Mr. Townshend, although he took Holy Orders, was not able, in consequence of ill-health, to retain his living, and having ample means, he cultivated his literary tastes, also proving himself a collector of good judgment and exquisite taste. He published privately a volume of poems and some works on Mesmerism, in which as a genuine science—in company with the late Archbishop Whateley—he was a very strong believer. Charles Dickens was Mr. Townshend's literary executor, and published a volume containing his friend's religious lucubrations. Several of the eminent writer's novels bequeathed to the Museum have his autograph, and one, *Great Expectations*, contains a sheet of note paper pasted in the first volume, and inscribed:—"Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent. Thursday, Fourth July, 1861. Chauncey Hare Townshend from Charles Dickens." There is also the MS. of the same work, bound up into a quarto volume. Mr. Townshend was an epigrammist, and he is credited with the dressing up in new form of the familiar epigram:—

They stole my portmanteau—I pity your grief,  
It contained all my sermons—I pity the thief.

The Rev. Chauncey Townshend had in his mind the pulpit plagiarist when he wrote the following clever variation:—

The thief who stole my sermons upon which I set such store,  
May safely give them back again, for they were stole before!

Two of Mr. Townshend's most valued friends, the beneficent Lady Burdett-Coutts, and the Rev. Thomas Helmore, M.A., the

Precentor of St. Mark's College, were appointed executors and devisees of the whole of his personal fortune, which was left in aid of educational improvements, having a special regard to free schools and for the help of those who are without the means of obtaining them. In 1876, the Townshend Free Night Schools, accommodating 900 children, which had been built near St. Stephen's Church, in Rochester-row, and endowed, were completed, Mrs. Hannah Brown laying the corner stone. The history of the Free Night Schools cannot be recounted without enlisting the sympathy and admiration of all who value educational advantages. Mr. Townshend was an able divine, an elegant scholar, a man of refined taste, and an authority in many branches of antiquarian and scientific research. As a young man he introduced himself to Robert Southey as an aspirant for poetical honours, and was invited to Greta Hall, Southey's residence at Keswick. Encouraged by the approbation of the elder poet, Mr. Townshend published a volume of poems in 1821, characterised by delicacy and refinement. It was not until 1851 that he brought out a second volume *Sermons in Sonnets*, and later *The Three Gates*. During the later part of his life he lived at his villa at Lausanne, Switzerland, which had the interest of an art museum.

WILLIAM STEVENS, J.P., who died on January 20th, 1869, at the age of 72, had been a member of the Corporation from November, 1837, until the close of 1866, a period of 29 years. He was elected an Alderman in 1844, and was Mayor in 1845, 1846, and 1848. Mr. Stevens was a ship-owner engaged in the coal and coasting trade, and his extensive knowledge of and experience in all matters connected with the port rendered his advice and assistance extremely valuable. In the year 1850 he was appointed, at the same time as Mr. Henry Morton, a Borough Justice, and in May of that year, when Ex-Mayor, he was presented at the Town Hall with a silver epergne, candelabra, coffee and tea service, valued at £170, in acknowledgment of the manner in which he thrice discharged the duties of the Mayoralty. He was for many years a Guardian of the poor for the parish of Wisbech St. Peter, and held other public appointments. In consequence of declining health, Mr. Stevens, for some years previous to his death, retired from the active duties of public life. His funeral in the Church Cemetery was attended by a large number of townsmen, who testified their regard for his memory.

EDWARD JACKSON, Walsoken House, Wisbech, eldest son of the Rev. Jeremiah Jackson, Vicar of Elm, died on April 4th, 1871, in his 70th year. On the death of his partner, Mr. John

Wing, he was appointed Town Clerk, the duties of which he honourably discharged for a period of 12 years, and was succeeded on May 15th, 1847, by his brother, Mr. Francis Jackson. Mr. Jackson also filled with ability and integrity the following offices:—Clerk to the Charity Trustees, to the Wisbech Division of Isle of Ely Justices and the Terrington Bench; Clerk to the North Level and Nene Outfall Commissioners; to the Wisbech and Chatteris, the Wisbech and Thorney, and the Crowland and Eye Turnpike Trusts; the Marshland Smeeth and Fen Drainage, Bardolph Drainage, Sutton St. Edmund's Common Drainage, Ouse Bank Commissioners (Third District), and other public bodies. In July, 1870, he retired from the firm of E. F. and E. Jackson, of which he was the head, and resigned the management into the hands of the remaining partners, his brother, Mr. Francis Jackson, and his son, Mr. Edward Hugh Jackson. One of the last public services he rendered was in assisting the Bishop of Ely, Archdeacon Emery, and Canon Hopkins in framing the Leverington Rectory Bill, which came into force in August, 1870, and effected a great improvement in the ecclesiastical arrangements of the neighbourhood. He was interred in Elm churchyard.

CHARLES METCALFE, J.P., was a member of the Wisbech Corporation for many years, and filled the office of Mayor in 1843. He was appointed Clerk of the Peace by the Duke of Bedford, (*Custos Rotulorum*) on the death of Mr. Hugh Jackson on March 1st, 1852, and held that office 15 years, resigning it in August, 1867, when his son, Mr. Frederic Morehouse Metcalfe, was appointed to succeed him. A month later, Mr. Chas. Metcalfe was added to the Commission of the Peace for the Isle of Ely, and subsequently for Norfolk. Mr. Metcalfe was a firm supporter of the Bible Society, and presided at the meeting held at Wisbech at the Jubilee celebration. Mr. Metcalfe built Inglethorpe Hall, Emneth, a mansion in the Elizabethan style (now occupied by Mr. F. M. Bland) and died on May 9th, 1871, in his 75th year, his interment taking place in Emneth churchyard.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

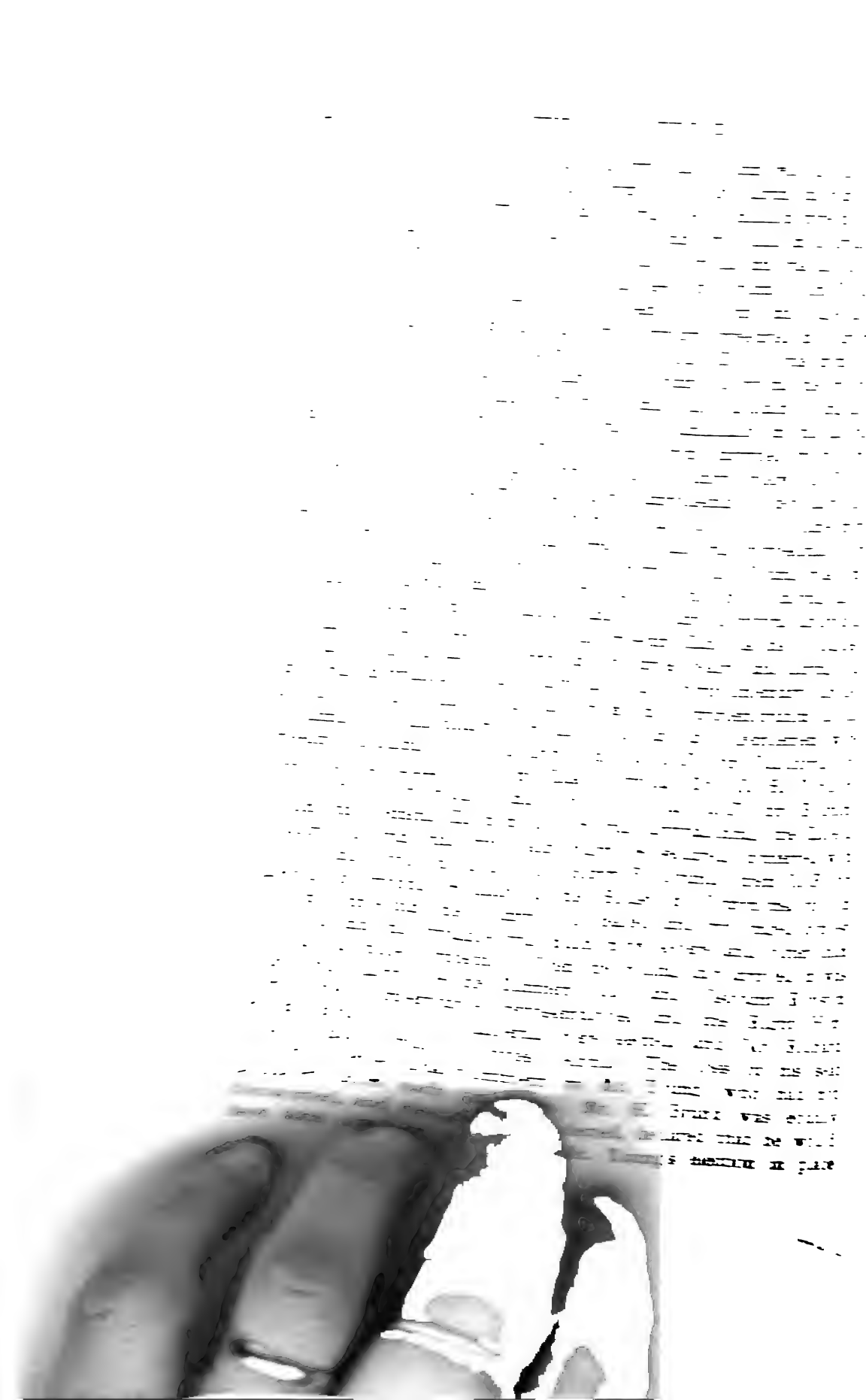
## SOME WISBECH WORTHIES OF THE PAST.

1871 TO 1895.



RICHARD YOUNG, M.P. for Cambridgeshire, Sheriff of London and Middlesex, five times. Mayor of Wisbech, J.P. for the Isle of Ely and Norfolk, died on October 15th, 1871, two days after he had been elected Sheriff of London and Middlesex at the City Guildhall. The ceremony of swearing in the new Sheriffs had been postponed from Michaelmas Day, on account of his illness, and when the day arrived, he was still unable to walk, but was carried from his State carriage to the dais in a chair. The Guildhall was very cold, and towards the close of the proceedings, he appeared very ill. Mr. Young was removed home, and two days later, a telegram was received at Wisbech from Mr. G. F. Young intimating his father's death, the announcement being quite unexpected. Mr. Young was the son of a Norfolk farmer, and was born at Scarning, near East Dereham, in 1809. In 1833, he was appointed Superintendent of the Nene Outfall Works, and keeper of the North Level Sluice in 1830, offices which he held for 19 years. During that time he acquired a share in a small trading vessel, and from the profits arising therefrom purchased in 1849, the Tycho Wing, a fine brig, built at Wisbech by Mr. Cousins, shipbuilder, and the largest vessel constructed up to that time in this port, the shipbuilding and repairing trade being then quite an important and flourishing industry in Wisbech. The barque, Richard Young, was also built

for him by Mr. Cousins, and was still larger than the Tycho Wing. It was at this time that Mr. Young left his post at the North Level Sluice, and built Osborne House, near Wisbech, designed for him by the late Mr. William Adams. It was a notable day in the port when the Lady Alice Lambton, Mr. Young's first screw steamer, 700 tons, arrived from the North, where it had just been launched, and was welcomed in February, 1853, with something of a demonstration. The Mayor and Corporation, and a large number of spectators, awaited the arrival of the vessel and received it with cheers, the crew replying with a salute of two guns. The vessel was 170 feet long, and had a cargo of 700 tons of coal. In the summer an excursion by this vessel was organized and 800 persons went in it to the mouth of the Humber. Before that time the Forager steamer had frequently taken such sea excursions, and on one occasion went as far as Scarborough to the Royal Agricultural Show, a trip which extended over three days. Mr. Young became the owner of quite a fleet of iron steamers and trading vessels. In September, 1854, his vessel, the Great Northern, was chartered to the Crimean War, and left Wisbech decked with flags, amidst firing of guns, and the playing of a band of music, taking a number of navvies and a cargo of their tools and materials to be used for the construction of fortifications. Another of his new steamers, Sir Colin Campbell, was sold by Mr. Young, within a week of being launched in the North, to the Turkish Government for the conveyance of troops. This vessel was re-named the Rechid Pasha, and after peace was restored, Mr. Young re-purchased it on advantageous terms. In fact it was understood that he sold it at about double its cost, and re-purchased it at not much more than half. The British Government also chartered some of his steamers for the conveyance of supplies to the army, and these profitable transactions laid the foundation of his wealth, his shipping business increasing rapidly. In connection with the costly Nene Valley Scheme at Wisbech, his services were of considerable value in protecting the interests of the Port at a critical period of its history. He had been already elected a member of the Corporation, and for five successive years was chosen Mayor, his term of office being distinguished by a succession of hospitalities and entertainments. In December, 1859, he was presented, in recognition of his services rendered on Parliamentary Committees, and in the Court of Chancery, during the Nene Valley Works inquiries, with a handsome candelabrum and a time-piece for Mrs. Young, which had been purchased by subscriptions collected from the inhabitants



of his own. The southern part of the County, around Royston and Newmarket, had evidently plumped for Mr. Brand, whose connection with Lord Dacre's family made him popular in that locality. This protracted and fiercely fought election extended over nearly four months, commencing early in August, and the poll being taken on November 24th, 1868. During its progress, on September 28th, a remarkable demonstration took place, when 200 country gentlemen and farmers, mostly on horseback, as well as some in carriages, met the Conservative candidates, who were driven into town in a carriage and four, with postilions in pink, the party colours. It was intended that the procession should return from the Great Eastern Station, after welcoming Lord George Manners and Viscount Royston, through Timber Market, but hearing that some opposition was possible, the Gaol Lane (now Queen's Road) route was taken instead. On arriving in Bridge Street Square, a crowd, disappointed at the change of route, offered some resistance to the passage of the horsemen. In the *mélée* that followed, Deputy-Lieutenant Taylor was knocked down, and the crowd being exasperated by the course of events, refused to hear the Conservative candidates speak from the Rose and Crown windows, a great uproar resulting. A counter demonstration afterwards took place by the Liberals, who dragged Mr. Brand and Mr. Young through Timber Market. Some roughs taking advantage of the prevailing excitement, broke a number of windows and became riotous and destructive. Litigation followed in the County Court, and Mr. Young was sued for the damaged property, the contention being that when he was raising his hat in acknowledgment of the cheers of his supporters, he was really encouraging the mob to break the windows. Judge Cooke gave a verdict for the plaintiff, a furniture dealer named Peacock, who had his windows broken, and ruled that Mr. Young, by waving his hat, abetted the rioters in their deeds of violence. Mr. Young appealed against this decision, and Mr. Justice Hawkins, who was then a Q.C., and appeared for Mr. Young, convulsed the Court by opening the case as a question of "waiver," an allusion to Mr. Young raising or waving his hat. The Court of Queen's Bench reversed the decision, and the whole of the costs of the litigation, which had lasted nearly twelve months, fell on the plaintiff and his friends. Mr. Young, after losing his seat for Cambridgeshire, tried to win one for King's Lynn, appearing at a bye-election, as a Liberal candidate against Lord Claude Hamilton, the present Chairman of the Great Eastern Railway. The declaration of the poll in December, 1869, resulted however, in his defeat once more



by the narrow majority of 19 votes, the poll being :—Lord C. J. Hamilton, 1051; Richard Young, 1032. Mr. Young was for several years a director of the Great Eastern Railway, and proposed Viscount Cranborne (the present Marquis of Salisbury) when he was elected Chairman of that Board. His knowledge of shipping matters was of great service to the Company in the development of its Continental steamboat service, the first sea-going vessel passing through the new water-way to the Maas by the Hook of Holland, being the "Richard Young" steamer, named by the Company after him, in recognition of his services. Mr. Young was also a Deputy Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, Chairman of the Peterborough, Wisbech, and Sutton Railway, and a Liveryman of the Loriners' and Fruiterers' Companies. Mr. Young was elected Sheriff of London and Middlesex in company with the late Sir Francis Truscott, but his death took place at his London house two days after he was sworn in, under circumstances referred to at the opening of this biographical notice. His funeral took place in Walsoken Church, on October 21st, 1871, the coffin having been brought from London. There was a very large following of his friends and townsmen, his State carriage and insignia of office as Sheriff of London and Middlesex forming part of the procession. The Rev. Dr. Cox, Sheriff's Chaplain, conducted the service, and preached a sermon on the following day in Walsoken Church, which was published. Mr. Young was 63 years of age. Subsequently a stained glass window was uncovered in Walsoken Church to Mr. Young's memory, and a subscription amounting to £400 was raised for the purpose of placing a portrait in the Council Chamber, and erecting a memorial column and drinking fountain in the Park. On April 3rd, 1872, in the Public Hall, Wisbech, the Right Hon. H. B. Brand, Speaker of the House of Commons, formally presented the portrait of Mr. Young, in his Sheriff's robes, to the Mayor (Ald. Ford), and Corporation. This portrait, which is by Mr. H. F. Creighton, of Sheffield, after having been exhibited for some time at the Guildhall, London, has been permanently located in the Council Chamber at Wisbech Town Hall. On October 31st, in the same year, the memorial column and drinking fountain erected in the Park, by subscription, was inaugurated by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Sills Gibbons, who was accompanied by Sir Francis Truscott and Sir John Bennett, ex-Sheriffs of London, Dr. Brady, M.P., Mr. Beard, under-Sheriff, Mr. Fildes, and others. The visitors were entertained to luncheon at the Rose and Crown Hotel previous to the ceremony, and were afterwards received at Osborne House by

Mrs. Young. The subscribers to the memorial included the Right Hon. the Speaker, The Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., Right Hon. John Bright, M.P., Right Hon. Hugh Childers, M.P., the Lord Mayor, Sir Edward Watkin, Bart, Dr. Brady, M.P., Ald. Lawrence, M.P. Mr. John Brown, J.P., was Chairman of the Committee, and the Rev. James Smith, the hon. secretary. The column was subsequently blown down in a high gale of wind and injured, but a committee was formed to restore it. With some slight alterations of design, the memorial has been reinstated, and greater stability given to it. Mrs. Richard Young, his widow, who proved a valuable helper to her husband in his upward career, still lives in Monica-road, Wisbech, and there is a large family of sons and daughters. Mr. Young's confidential helper in his shipping business, Mr. Thos. G. Beatley (Beatley and Son), of Leadenhall Street, London, has since become a steam-ship owner, and has been for many years a member of the City of London Corporation, representing the Aldgate Ward, as well as Chairman of the City of London Orphan Schools, and other responsible positions in the management of City affairs.

WILLIAM ELLIS, a well-known Christian missionary, though not actually a native of Wisbech was brought to Wisbech when four years of age, and received his early education here, being subsequently employed as a gardener in the neighbourhood. Afterwards he became a missionary to the South Sea and Sandwich Islands (1816-25), where he possessed considerable influence, as is recorded in *Watson's History of Wisbech*, which contains a sketch of his earlier life. Subsequently he represented the London Missionary Society in Madagascar, where he surmounted great difficulties, and was mainly instrumental in securing for that country, self-government, constitutional liberty, and religious freedom. He published a work recording the progress of religious work and civilization in that island. Mr. Ellis visited Wisbech in April, 1860, delivering an address on Madagascar, at which although Mr. Ellis was a Congregationalist, the Vicar (Canon Hopkins) Dr. Whitsed, and many prominent townsmen were present, and a collection was made on behalf of the Society with which he was so long associated. At the same time four missionaries, all belonging to Wisbech, met in the town, viz., Revs. W. Ellis, W. Shaw, Superintendent of Wesleyan Missions in South Africa, Henry Wilkinson and I. Stubbins, Baptist Missionaries in India. In January, 1862, the interest shown in Mr. Ellis' work was indicated by the clock presented by Wisbech residents, and an atlas from the Rev. G. Thompson, Master of the Grammar

School, to Radama II., King of Madagascar, which gifts were cordially acknowledged by the King.\* Mr. Ellis visited Wisbech in 1867, when he lectured again on Madagascar, and was entertained at breakfast in the Lecture Room, Public Hall, under the presidency of Dr. Howson, who was then Vicar of Wisbech. Mr. Ellis subsequently retired from missionary work, and died at his residence at Rose Hill, Hoddesdon, Herts., on the 9th of June, 1872, at the age of 77. A portrait in oils of Mr. Ellis was presented to the Working Men's Institute by Mr. Jonathan Peckover, and is placed in the Hall of that Institution. The Museum contains specimens of Chinese, Japanese, Burmese, Siamese, and Malagasy costumes, presented by the Rev. W. Ellis, having been obtained in the course of his missionary journeys. Mrs. Ellis, wife of the Rev. William Ellis, was the authoress of the once popular *Mothers of England*, *Wives of England*, and kindred works. She belonged to the Society of Friends at first, and afterwards to the Congregationalists, and kept a flourishing school for the future "Wives of England," about whom she wrote, at Rawdon House, Hoddeston, Hertfordshire, a handsome Jacobean residence built in the reign of James I., afterwards visited by Charles I., and, later still, tenanted by Richard Cromwell. Mrs. Ellis wrote altogether about forty books.

ROBERT WHERRY, J.P., four times Mayor of Wisbech, died on February 14th, 1873, at the age of 64 years. He had been 25 years a member of the Corporation, having been returned in 1848, and elected Mayor in 1854, 1868, 1869, and 1870. Mr. Wherry was chosen an Alderman in 1858 on the resignation of Mr. Charles Metcalfe, and a Magistrate in 1869. In 1871 he was invited to take part in the opening of the International Exhibition, and was presented to the Prince of Wales on that occasion. He was also a Guardian of the Poor and Chairman of the Board, Charity Trustee, Trustee of the North Cambs. Hospital, Chairman of the Nene Navigation Commissioners, Treasurer of the Public Hall Company, Director of the Gas and Water Companies, &c. He had taken a very active part in the erection of the new Baptist Church and Schools in Ely Place, the opening of which was fixed to take place the day before his death, but was postponed to the following month. In his public duties he guided the affairs of the town with great discretion and judgment, at a

\* A photographic portrait of the late Radama II., taken by the Rev. W. Ellis, is hung in the Working Men's Institute committee-room. It shows the King in military dress, with his crown on a table.

time when strong party feeling was exhibited, and he was chosen Mayor in 1868 because of his conciliatory and judicious handling of contentious matters. For thirty-two years he was a deacon of Ely Place Church, and nearly thirty years its Sunday School superintendent. He was a consistent and active Nonconformist in times when men were called upon to suffer for their conscientious convictions, and on one occasion, having refused to pay Church Rates from conscientious motives, his goods, and those of Mr. George Reed and Mr. G. F. Lilley, were sold by auction on the Market Place to meet the claim. The respect of his fellow citizens for Ald. Wherry's memory was shown in the large gathering around his grave in the Leverington Road Cemetery on the 20th of February, 1873, when the Corporation and other public officials, with the officers and members of Ely Place Church attended. Subsequently a handsome granite obelisk was erected to his memory. An appreciative sketch of his life and Christian virtues was afterwards published, entitled, *Work Here, Rest Beyond*, written by the Rev. Edward Carey Pike, B.A., and in a small work, entitled, *A Pastoral Medley*, by the Rev. W. E. Winks, a former Minister of Ely Place Chapel, he pays the following tribute to his worth:—

An Alderman of the Borough, a Justice of the Peace, four times elected Mayor, he never allowed his honours and duties to spoil his interest or check his zeal in the work of the Church and Sunday School. It is safe to say that no man in the town or county to which he belonged did more to win respect for religion in general and for our Nonconformist and Puritan type thereof in particular than Robert Wherry.

HENRY LEACH was Town Bailiff in 1835 when the Princess Victoria, now Her Majesty the Queen, passed through Wisbech with her mother, the Duchess of Kent, on their way from Stamford and Peterborough to visit the Earl of Leicester at Holkham. On behalf of the Capital Burgesses and the Town, Mr. Leach presented the Royal visitors with a copy of Colonel Watson's *History of Wisbech*, which is referred to in a previous chapter describing the reception of the Princess. Mr. Leach was the first Mayor elected after the passing of the Municipal Act, and twice subsequently, in 1839 and 1847, occupied the Mayoral chair. He was also a Guardian of the Poor. His death took place on June 28th, 1873, at his residence in Upper Hill Street, at the age of 75, and a number of his townsmen attended his funeral in the Church Cemetery. A portrait of Mr. Henry Leach, presented by his family, is in the Council Chamber.

WILLIAM PECKOVER, F.S.A., of Bank House, who died on May 12th, 1877, in his 87th year, was descended from a family one of whom had served in Cromwell's Ironsides, and who subsequently settled at Fakenham, Norfolk, where he joined the Society of Friends. One of his descendants, Jonathan Peckover, came to Wisbech in 1777, and founded the banking firm, until recently known as Gurney, Birkbeck, Peckovers, and Buxton in 1782, and died in 1833. He left a family of six sons and one daughter, the three sons who survived him being William Peckover, banker, of Wisbech; Daniel Peckover, wool-stapler, Bradford; and Algernon Peckover, banker, of Wisbech. Mr. William Peckover was thus the eldest surviving son of Mr. Jonathan Peckover, the originator of the Bank, which first commenced its business in High Street. Mr. Peckover was a man of antiquarian learning and tastes, and an F.S.A. He was one of the founders of the Wisbech Museum, of which he was President for many years, and contributed liberally to its endowment, besides being a donor to its collection, he and his brother purchasing Dr. Stanger's collection of minerals, and providing cases and appliances for other objects. The North Cambs. Hospital, British and Foreign Bible Society, and Working Men's Institute were also recipients of his liberality, the Hospital Endowment Fund receiving from him £2,000 in augmentation of Miss Trafford Southwell's generous gifts to that fund. At the Jubilee of the Isle of Ely Auxiliary Bible Society (Northern Division) on June 16th, 1863, Mr. William Peckover presided at the evening meeting, as the only survivor of the first supporters of the Auxiliary Branch in 1813, when it was established. His interment took place in the ground attached to the Friends' Meeting House, on May 17th, 1877.

MISS MARY ELIZABETH TRAFFORD SOUTHWELL, of Honington Hall, Grantham, who died on November 24th, 1879, was the elder daughter of Sigismund Trafford,\* and a generous benefactor to Wisbech. Its inhabitants owe a debt of gratitude to the munificent generosity of that lady for the foundation at her own cost, and substantial endowment, of the North Cambridgeshire Hospital, adjoining the Park. The two days are memorable in the annals of the Borough when the foundress herself laid the memorial stone in the presence of the Mayor and Corporation, magistrates, and a large number of inhabitants on the 16th

\* Though Mr. Trafford was entitled to take the name of Southwell he did not do so, but his daughter, Miss M. E. Trafford did, in obedience to her aunt's will.

October, 1872, and also, later, when the Hospital was formally opened and presented to the town by the same lady on the 2nd of October, 1873, the Mayor and Corporation, Volunteers, and Friendly Societies assisting in the ceremony. Luncheon was served after the opening at the Corn Exchange, the Mayor (Ald. Ford) presiding. The first patient was admitted on the 22nd of November, 1873. In addition to the gift of the site and the building, as well as the endowment of the Hospital (Messrs. Peckover, the Duke of Bedford, Mr. G. D. Collins and others contributing largely to the Endowment Fund) Miss Southwell gave £500 at the opening, and £500 in Wisbech Waterworks Shares for the maintenance of the Hospital grounds. From time to time, the Hospital Committee received, as long as she lived, further evidences of her interest in the institution she had so generously founded, and it may be mentioned that on March 23rd, 1875, a resolution was passed by the Committee acknowledging the gift by Miss Trafford Southwell of additional rooms at the Hospital erected at a cost of £1,400. Miss Southwell was a descendant of an old Wisbech family, and her paternal grandmother lived at Wisbech Castle up to her marriage, when she went to Dunton Hall, in Tydd St. Mary, in 1760. Several monuments to the Southwell family are to be found in the Parish Church. A work on the Bedford Level, supposed to have been the earliest book printed in Wisbech, in 1728, was written by an ancestor of Miss Southwell.

WILLIAM DAWBARN, of Elmswood, Liverpool, eldest son of Mr. Robert Dawbarn, J.P., was a resident in Wisbech for the first forty years of his life, associated with the firm of Dawbarn and Sons, and afterward's the proprietor of a cotton factory which was started in the town. He was for several years a member of the Town Council and was proposed for the Mayoralty, though not elected. He took an active part in promoting locally the sending of exhibits to the 1851 Exhibition, towards which Wisbech subscribed £67, and received an official Exhibition medal in acknowledgment of his services as secretary. He was one of the earliest to commence Sunday School work in Wisbech, starting a Sunday afternoon class in a room in Hill Street. He left Wisbech, about 1862, to take the business at Liverpool of his father-in-law, the late Mr. Yelverton, agent for Colonel Pennant, now Lord Penrhyn, at the Penrhyn Slate Quarries, Bangor, and under his management the business rapidly increased, comprising almost every branch of the building trade, until it became one of the largest of the kind in the country. He was elected a member

of Wisbech. Whilst he was Mayor, Mr. Young received a silver cradle on the occasion of the birth of a son during his year of office, and a silver trowel when laying the foundation stone of the Chapel of Ease at Walsoken. Mr. Young was made an Alderman, also Magistrate for the Isle of Ely and Norfolk, and was associated with the inauguration of the Volunteer movement. Mrs. Young presented the Corps with the Queen's Colours and bugle, and Ensign Young was among the first officers presented at Court in uniform. On the retirement of the Hon. Eliot Yorke from the representation of Cambridgeshire, Viscount Royston, the present Earl of Hardwicke, came forward, and Mr. Richard Young also announced his intention to become a candidate in the Liberal interest. The intimation was received with surprise, by the constituency, especially in the parts of the County where Mr. Young was not so well known, but after canvassing a few days, his candidature aroused such a response, that Mr. H. J. Adeane, from health considerations, who had been the Liberal representative for eight years, thought it desirable to retire. Mr. Young was consequently returned unopposed on July 18th, 1865, having Lord George Manners (since deceased), and Viscount Royston, afterwards the Earl of Hardwicke, father of the present Earl, as his colleagues. He sat in the House of Commons for three years, and during that time was entertained by his constituents at a complimentary banquet at the Public Hall, Wisbech, given in commemoration of his obtaining Parliamentary honours. About 200 gentlemen were present, including Mr. Guildford Onslow, M.P. for Guildford, Mr. Clare Sewell Read, M.P. for East Norfolk, Mr. G. H. Whalley, M.P. for Peterborough, and Mr. J. Wyld, M.P. for Bodmin. When the General Election of 1868 was approaching, the Liberal leaders believing that two seats might be secured, conferred with Mr. Young, who induced Mr. Henry B. Brand, then M.P. for Lewes, afterwards Speaker of the House of Commons, to join him in contesting the county. A heated and prolonged contest followed, and the struggle was much more severe and bitter than is usual at these contests. When the polling day arrived it was found that Lord George Manners (3998) and Viscount Royston (3874) the Conservative representatives, and the Right Hon. H. B. Brand (3,300) Liberal, were elected, and Mr. Richard Young (3290), was 10 votes behind. The loss of his seat was an intense disappointment to Mr. Young, who had not calculated upon such an issue. Mr. H. Brand was equally disconcerted, and though himself elected, declared that he would have done anything to secure Mr. Young's election in place

of his own. The southern part of the County, around Royston and Newmarket, had evidently plumped for Mr. Brand, whose connection with Lord Dacre's family made him popular in that locality. This protracted and fiercely fought election extended over nearly four months, commencing early in August, and the poll being taken on November 24th, 1868. During its progress, on September 28th, a remarkable demonstration took place, when 200 country gentlemen and farmers, mostly on horseback, as well as some in carriages, met the Conservative candidates, who were driven into town in a carriage and four, with postilions in pink, the party colours. It was intended that the procession should return from the Great Eastern Station, after welcoming Lord George Manners and Viscount Royston, through Timber Market, but hearing that some opposition was possible, the Gaol Lane (now Queen's Road) route was taken instead. On arriving in Bridge Street Square, a crowd, disappointed at the change of route, offered some resistance to the passage of the horsemen. In the *mélée* that followed, Deputy-Lieutenant Taylor was knocked down, and the crowd being exasperated by the course of events, refused to hear the Conservative candidates speak from the Rose and Crown windows, a great uproar resulting. A counter demonstration afterwards took place by the Liberals, who dragged Mr. Brand and Mr. Young through Timber Market. Some roughs taking advantage of the prevailing excitement, broke a number of windows and became riotous and destructive. Litigation followed in the County Court, and Mr. Young was sued for the damaged property, the contention being that when he was raising his hat in acknowledgment of the cheers of his supporters, he was really encouraging the mob to break the windows. Judge Cooke gave a verdict for the plaintiff, a furniture dealer named Peacock, who had his windows broken, and ruled that Mr. Young, by waving his hat, abetted the rioters in their deeds of violence. Mr. Young appealed against this decision, and Mr. Justice Hawkins, who was then a Q.C., and appeared for Mr. Young, convulsed the Court by opening the case as a question of "waiver," an allusion to Mr. Young raising or waving his hat. The Court of Queen's Bench reversed the decision, and the whole of the costs of the litigation, which had lasted nearly twelve months, fell on the plaintiff and his friends. Mr. Young, after losing his seat for Cambridgeshire, tried to win one for King's Lynn, appearing at a bye-election, as a Liberal candidate against Lord Claude Hamilton, the present Chairman of the Great Eastern Railway. The declaration of the poll in December, 1869, resulted however, in his defeat once more



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WILLIAM ELLIS, a well-known Christian missionary, though not actually a native of Wisbech was brought to Wisbech when four years of age, and received his early education here, being subsequently employed as a gardener in the neighbourhood. Afterwards he became a missionary to the South Sea and Sandwich Islands (1816-25), where he possessed considerable influence, as is recorded in *Watson's History of Wisbech*, which contains a sketch of his earlier life. Subsequently he represented the London Missionary Society in Madagascar, where he surmounted great difficulties, and was mainly instrumental in securing for that country, self-government, constitutional liberty, and religious freedom. He published a work recording the progress of religious work and civilization in that island. Mr. Ellis visited Wisbech in April, 1860, delivering an address on Madagascar, at which although Mr. Ellis was a Congregationalist, the Vicar (Canon Hopkins) Dr. Whitsed, and many prominent townsmen were present, and a collection was made on behalf of the Society with which he was so long associated. At the same time four missionaries, all belonging to Wisbech, met in the town, viz., Revs. W. Ellis, W. Shaw, Superintendent of Wesleyan Missions in South Africa, Henry Wilkinson and I. Stubbins, Baptist Missionaries in India. In January, 1862, the interest shown in Mr. Ellis' work was indicated by the clock presented by Wisbech residents, and an atlas from the Rev. G. Thompson, Master of the Grammar

School, to Radama II., King of Madagascar, which gifts were cordially acknowledged by the King.\* Mr. Ellis visited Wisbech in 1867, when he lectured again on Madagascar, and was entertained at breakfast in the Lecture Room, Public Hall, under the presidency of Dr. Howson, who was then Vicar of Wisbech. Mr. Ellis subsequently retired from missionary work, and died at his residence at Rose Hill, Hoddesdon, Herts., on the 9th of June, 1872, at the age of 77. A portrait in oils of Mr. Ellis was presented to the Working Men's Institute by Mr. Jonathan Peckover, and is placed in the Hall of that Institution. The Museum contains specimens of Chinese, Japanese, Burmese, Siamese, and Malagasy costumes, presented by the Rev. W. Ellis, having been obtained in the course of his missionary journeys. Mrs. Ellis, wife of the Rev. William Ellis, was the authoress of the once popular *Mothers of England*, *Wives of England*, and kindred works. She belonged to the Society of Friends at first, and afterwards to the Congregationalists, and kept a flourishing school for the future "Wives of England," about whom she wrote, at Rawdon House, Hoddeston, Hertfordshire, a handsome Jacobean residence built in the reign of James I., afterwards visited by Charles I., and, later still, tenanted by Richard Cromwell. Mrs. Ellis wrote altogether about forty books.

ROBERT WHERRY, J.P., four times Mayor of Wisbech, died on February 14th, 1873, at the age of 64 years. He had been 25 years a member of the Corporation, having been returned in 1848, and elected Mayor in 1854, 1868, 1869, and 1870. Mr. Wherry was chosen an Alderman in 1858 on the resignation of Mr. Charles Metcalfe, and a Magistrate in 1869. In 1871 he was invited to take part in the opening of the International Exhibition, and was presented to the Prince of Wales on that occasion. He was also a Guardian of the Poor and Chairman of the Board, Charity Trustee, Trustee of the North Cambs. Hospital, Chairman of the Nene Navigation Commissioners, Treasurer of the Public Hall Company, Director of the Gas and Water Companies, &c. He had taken a very active part in the erection of the new Baptist Church and Schools in Ely Place, the opening of which was fixed to take place the day before his death, but was postponed to the following month. In his public duties he guided the affairs of the town with great discretion and judgment, at a

\* A photographic portrait of the late Radama II., taken by the Rev. W. Ellis, is hung in the Working Men's Institute committee-room. It shows the King in military dress, with his crown on a table.

time when strong party feeling was exhibited, and he was chosen Mayor in 1868 because of his conciliatory and judicious handling of contentious matters. For thirty-two years he was a deacon of Ely Place Church, and nearly thirty years its Sunday School superintendent. He was a consistent and active Nonconformist in times when men were called upon to suffer for their conscientious convictions, and on one occasion, having refused to pay Church Rates from conscientious motives, his goods, and those of Mr. George Reed and Mr. G. F. Lilley, were sold by auction on the Market Place to meet the claim. The respect of his fellow citizens for Ald. Wherry's memory was shown in the large gathering around his grave in the Leverington Road Cemetery on the 20th of February, 1873, when the Corporation and other public officials, with the officers and members of Ely Place Church attended. Subsequently a handsome granite obelisk was erected to his memory. An appreciative sketch of his life and Christian virtues was afterwards published, entitled, *Work Here, Rest Beyond*, written by the Rev. Edward Carey Pike, B.A., and in a small work, entitled, *A Pastoral Medley*, by the Rev. W. E. Winks, a former Minister of Ely Place Chapel, he pays the following tribute to his worth:—

An Alderman of the Borough, a Justice of the Peace, four times elected Mayor, he never allowed his honours and duties to spoil his interest or check his zeal in the work of the Church and Sunday School. It is safe to say that no man in the town or county to which he belonged did more to win respect for religion in general and for our Nonconformist and Puritan type thereof in particular than Robert Wherry.

HENRY LEACH was Town Bailiff in 1835 when the Princess Victoria, now Her Majesty the Queen, passed through Wisbech with her mother, the Duchess of Kent, on their way from Stamford and Peterborough to visit the Earl of Leicester at Holkham. On behalf of the Capital Burgesses and the Town, Mr. Leach presented the Royal visitors with a copy of Colonel Watson's *History of Wisbech*, which is referred to in a previous chapter describing the reception of the Princess. Mr. Leach was the first Mayor elected after the passing of the Municipal Act, and twice subsequently, in 1839 and 1847, occupied the Mayoral chair. He was also a Guardian of the Poor. His death took place on June 28th, 1873, at his residence in Upper Hill Street, at the age of 75, and a number of his townsmen attended his funeral in the Church Cemetery. A portrait of Mr. Henry Leach, presented by his family, is in the Council Chamber.

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31st of December, 1890, in his 87th year. He was in 1829 taken into partnership with his father, as a solicitor, on the South Brink, under the title of Jackson and Son, and after his father's death in 1852, Mr. George Duppa Collins joined the firm, which was then known as Jackson and Collins. This partnership was dissolved in 1858, from which time Mr. Jackson practised alone. He was a member of the Wisbech Corporation from 1835 to 1852, Clerk to several Drainage Boards, Lord of the Manor of Sutton Holland (Long Sutton, in Lincolnshire), Deputy-Steward for the Manor of Wisbech Barton, Chairman of Mrs. Wright's Charity Trust. For 48 years he held the Clerkship of the Court of Sewers for the Hundred of Wisbech, a body which has done important work in the drainage of the district. He was Superintendent Registrar of Births, Marriages, and Deaths for half-a-century, from 1837 to 1887, and for some years Clerk to the Wisbech Guardians. He was a generous supporter of charitable objects, a staunch Churchman, and when Cambridgeshire was a three-cornered constituency always entertained the members of the Yorke family who sought the suffrages of the electors of the Isle of Ely. In January, 1878, Mr. Jackson was presented with a silver candelabra and illuminated address by his Wisbech tenantry, as a mark of their esteem, on the completion of 50 years as a landlord, the presentation being made by Mr. Thomas Cockett, for over 25 years his tenant. Mr. Jackson was interred at Duddington, Northamptonshire, in which parish he was the principal owner of the soil, and for some years an occasional resident, as well as churchwarden. The family seat at Duddington is now occupied by his son, Mr. W. Goddard Jackson.

WILLIAM SMITH, High Street, Wisbech, who died on March 14th, 1891, in his 78th year, was at one time a member of the Corporation, and one of the first volunteers enrolled, continuing for many years an active member of that defensive force. In later years, except as a Charity Trustee and Director of the Museum, he had taken no part in public life. He was regarded as an authority on art questions, and almost in every past local exhibition of paintings and articles of *virtu* he was the moving spirit, arranging with admirable tact and skill the exhibits. On November 1st, 1881, he delivered an address on "Art as applied to Painting," to the Reading and Discussion Class of the Working Men's Institute, in connection with an exhibition of pictures in the Institute. The address was afterwards printed for private circulation. He enjoyed his retired life amidst a small but choice collection of paintings, comprising such masters as

Pyne, Stanfield, Müller, Etty, and others, and his rare specimens of *bric à brac*, which he was ever ready to show and to enlarge upon with a connoisseur's enthusiasm. Mr. Smith was interred in the Church Cemetery at Wisbech.

SAMUEL SMITH, Leverington Terrace, Wisbech, familiarly known to his many friends as "Philosopher" Smith, a complimentary allusion to his varied knowledge and love of scientific investigation, died on July 18th, 1892. He was born on February 28th, 1802, and was consequently in his 91st year. He was an ardent numismatist, possessed a very valuable collection of coins and tokens, of which he possessed an extensive knowledge, also valuable gems, a great variety of shells and entomological specimens, which Mr. and Mrs. Smith collected and critically examined under a powerful microscope constructed by himself. He was also an exceptionally skilled mechanic, as well as an adept in almost all wood and metal working tools, and in grinding and polishing his own specula lenses. He was a liberal patron of the Wisbech Museum, devoting much time in assisting Mr. Algernon Peckover in the arrangement of the objects and naming them. He was an amateur photographer for years before it became a fashionable pastime and many old and interesting photographs of Wisbech are in existence which indicate his ability in this direction. His good-humoured stories and conversation were always attractive to his friends, who never spent a pleasanter hour than when admiring his "curios" and exploring the mysteries of his "den" at Leverington Terrace, which was a treasure-house of rare and unique objects. His interment took place in the Leverington Road Cemetery on Friday, July 22nd, 1892. The Rev. W. E. Winks, in his work entitled *A Pastoral Medley*, thus writes of the late Mr. Smith as "My Philosopher Friend":—

A man of ample means and leisure, he had spent his time and gifts in out-door and in-door study, in collecting specimens, in the manufacture of scientific instruments. What was he? An astronomer? Yes, the best amateur astronomer I ever knew. When asked to show a particular nebula, cluster or double star, he would turn his 4-inch chromatic telescope upon it in a moment. A geologist? A mineralogist? A paleontologist? Yes, he had worked in the field and the laboratory, and made his own wonderful collection, every specimen of which he could name at sight. A conchologist? To be sure. Look at these drawers of beautiful shells, and is not his collection of land and fresh water shells of the Fenland in the Wisbech Museum to this day? Ask him to show you his Hemiptera, Lepidoptera, &c., but not unless you are prepared to go through with them all. See how his eyes sparkle if you bring him a rare Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Ancient British, Saxon, Danish, or English coin, to look at and name for you.



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What are these tiny cabinets with their neat little drawers? Microscopic specimens—mineral, botanic, organic—prepared and mounted by himself, and shown in the fine microscope made with his own hands. Look at this little glass cistern full of ditch-water and its lenses at the end. Hear him discourse on the Rotifera, Amœba, Cheironymous Lava, "Dead as ditch-water!" I fancy I hear him say, "Why it's one of the liveliest things I know, is a glass full of ditch-water."

FREDERIC MOREHOUSE METCALFE, J.P., D.L., Clerk of the Peace and of the Isle of Ely County Council, of Inglethorpe Hall, Wisbech, and Julians, Buntingford, succeeded his father, Mr. Charles Metcalfe, in the office of Clerk of the Peace, in 1867, and had thus held it for twenty-six years. His father had previously held it for fifteen years, so that the appointment had been in the family for more than a generation. Mr. F. M. Metcalfe's tenure of office was associated with important changes in the government of the Isle of Ely. When in 1889 a new system of County Government was initiated by Parliament, Mr. Metcalfe took infinite pains and trouble to place arguments before the Government, which resulted in the maintenance of the ancient independent jurisdiction of the Isle of Ely. The organization of the new county administration threw a great amount of work upon the Clerk, and this ultimately affected his health, necessitating a prolonged holiday. Mr. Metcalfe's death took place on October 15th, 1893, while staying at Limmers Hotel, London, from congestion of the lungs, at the age of 65. He held several public appointments, but in no direction did he render more energetic service than in the Volunteer Movement. When the Wisbech Volunteer Corps was formed thirty-five years ago, he entered as a private, and advanced successively to the rank of Ensign, Captain, Major, and finally Lieut.-Colonel in command of the regiment. He was a Justice of the Peace for Norfolk, a Deputy-Lieutenant, Governor of the Wisbech Grammar School, Charity Trustee, and Secretary of the Wisbech Museum. He was Lord of the Manors of Walsoken, Metcalfe and Emneth Hagbech of the parts of Emneth and Walsoken, and Inglethorpe and of Ellingham, near Swaffham; and steward for the late Lord Lieutenant's Manor of Beaupré Hall, Outwell (Mr. C. W. Townley). On the occasion of his marriage with Miss M. F. Meetkerke, of Julians, he was presented by the Volunteers, whom he had formerly commanded, with a dress sword. The funeral took place from Inglethorpe Hall, the remains having been removed from London to his residence, and was attended by the Isle of Ely County Council, the Mayor and Corporation, Magistrates, Clergy, and Representatives of Public Bodies, the day, October 20th,

being that on which, two years before, the first Chairman of the same County Council (Mr. O. C. Pell, J.P.), of which Mr. Metcalfe was Clerk, was buried.

CHARLES WATSON TOWNLEY, M.A., of Fulbourne Manor, near Cambridge, Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, and formerly *Custos Rotulorum* of the Isle of Ely, died on October 17th, 1893. He was at one time Chairman of the Liberal party in Cambridgeshire, and in 1869 made the presentation of a testimonial to Mr. and Mrs. R. Young at a public dinner given to Mr. Young at Cambridge. When Mr. H. J. Adeane died, Mr. Townley succeeded to the office of *Custos Rotulorum* of the Isle of Ely, and on the death of the Earl of Hardwicke in 1874, the Lord Lientenancy of Cambridgeshire was conferred upon him by Mr. Gladstone, the Duke of Bedford succeeding him in the office of *Custos*. Mr. Townley seceded from the Liberal party on the Home Rule question, and later became Chairman of the Liberal Unionist Association. Mr. Townley discharged the duties of his office with great courtesy and ability, and was very popular in the county, taking an active part in its business as an Alderman of the Cambridgeshire County Council, and in other official capacities. His last visit to Wisbech was for the purpose of opening a grand Volunteer Bazaar and Military Encampment at the Corn Exchange, on the 22nd September, 1892. His interment took place at Fulbourne, on Saturday, October 21st, 1893, the day after that of the Clerk of the Peace (Mr. F. M. Metcalfe), whose death had occurred two days previously to that of the Lord Lieutenant.

ALGERNON PECKOVER, F.L.S., of Sibald's Holme, had entered his 91st year when his death took place on December 10th, 1893. He was the third surviving son of Mr. Jonathan Peckover, the founder of Messrs. Gurney, Birkbeck, and Peckover's Bank, and was a partner in that firm. He was President of the Wisbech Museum for several years, and a liberal benefactor, his gifts during his lifetime to this institution amounting to upwards of £3,000. He erected a building for the enlargement of the library, effecting a great improvement, and furnished it completely for the reception of additional books; also he presented glass cases for the preservation of objects in the Museum, and gave many unique and valuable specimens to fill them. His interest in the Wisbech British Schools before the passing of the Elementary Education Act, was of the most practical and valuable kind, and not long before his death he showed his interest in educational matters by contributing £5,000 to a High Grade School of the Society of Friends at Laughton Park, near Reading. The Hospital and

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ALGERNON PECKOVER, F.L.S., of Sibald's Holme, had entered his 91st year when his death took place on December 10th, 1893. He was the third surviving son of Mr. Jonathan Peckover, the founder of Messrs. Gurney, Birkbeck, and Peckover's Bank, and was a partner in that firm. He was President of the Wisbech Museum for several years, and a liberal benefactor, his gifts during his lifetime to this institution amounting to upwards of £3,000. He erected a building for the enlargement of the library, effecting a great improvement, and furnished it completely for the reception of additional books; also he presented glass cases for the preservation of objects in the Museum, and gave many unique and valuable specimens to fill them. His interest in the Wisbech British Schools before the passing of the Elementary Education Act, was of the most practical and valuable kind, and not long before his death he showed his interest in educational matters by contributing £5,000 to a High Grade School of the Society of Friends at Laughton Park, near Reading. The Hospital and

Working Men's Institute were generously helped, and he contributed largely to the purchase of the Fry Library by the Bible Society. At one time, Mr. Peckover was a member of the Corporation, and was thrice elected Alderman, and subsequently succeeded Mr. William Peckover, his brother, as Borough Treasurer. He retired from the banking firm with which he had been long associated about two years before his death, and when he died at the mature age of 90, left behind him legacies to the Museum, North Cambs. Hospital, Working Men's Institute, Bible Society, and to the *employés* of the Bank. His personal estate was affirmed at £1,163,286. The interment took place in the graveyard attached to the Society of Friends' Meeting House on the North Brink, in the presence of a large number of his personal friends and fellow townsmen.

GEORGE DUPPA COLLINS, South Brink, who died on June 1st, 1894, was in his 91st year, and survived his wife scarcely five months. He was born in London, but had been resident in Wisbech for 64 years, having entered, at the age of 27, the office of Mr. Hugh Jackson, solicitor, and was subsequently taken into partnership. Upon the death of Mr. Hugh Jackson, the firm was known as Jackson and Collins, until about 1858, when the partnership was dissolved, and Mr. Collins practised separately. From 1837 to 1875, a period of 28 years, Mr. Collins discharged the duties of Clerk to the Wisbech Board of Guardians, and was succeeded by his nephew, Mr. James Duppa Collins. He was a generous contributor to the Hospital Endowment and Maintenance Funds, a liberal landlord, and a ready supporter of deserving institutions and objects. He was interred in Emneth churchyard, and his two married daughters, Mrs. Pocock and Mrs. Prankard, have erected a handsome memorial fountain in the Old Market, Wisbech, from the designs of Mr. Armitstead, R.A., to the memory of Mr. and Mrs. Collins.

COLONEL LANCELOT REED, J.P., D.L., of Graysmoor, Elm, died on the 1st September, 1894, within a few days of his 65th birthday. He served in the 4th Suffolk Regiment (Cambridge Militia) for 38 years, and commanded it for seven years until September, 1890, when he resigned. A handsome brass has been erected to his memory by his brother officers in the south aisle of Ely Cathedral, the plate bearing his crest and motto "*In Deo omnia*," with the following inscription:—

In affectionate remembrance of Colonel Lancelot Reed, J.P., D.L., of Elm, Wisbech, born 6th October, 1829; died 1st September, 1894. He served 38 years in the 4th Suffolk Regiment (Cambridge Militia),

and commanded from September, 1883, to September, 1890. Erected by the officers past and present.

Colonel Reed was a Justice of the Peace for the Isle of Ely, and presided over the Wisbech Bench for some years; Chairman of the Court of Sewers, and a County Councillor of the Isle of Ely.

RICHARD BUNBURY DAWBARN, formerly of Wisbech, and latterly resident at Leamington, died on April 10th, 1897, at the age of 64 years. He was the fifth son of Mr. Robert Dawbarn, J.P., and was for some years associated with his father, in the firm of Dawbarn & Sons. His lectures, entitled, "Wisbech in the Days of our Grandfathers," are published in this volume, and before his death he revised the proofs of those interesting reminiscences of bye-gone days. He was the author of the brief sketch of Wisbech in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and his literary and artistic attainments and wide range of general knowledge constituted him an authority upon many historical and topographical matters, one of his successful efforts in that direction being the paper read before the British Archæological Society, when it visited Wisbech, giving a description of Wisbech Castle. In all matters pertaining to art, Mr. Dawbarn was ready to help, whether in promoting the teaching under the South Kensington Department, or in encouraging Art and Industrial Exhibitions. Mr. Dawbarn was associated with many religious and philanthropic movements in Wisbech, until he removed to Leamington, when he was presented by the Hill Street Baptist Church, of which he was a deacon, with a copy of the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, at that time just re-published. His interment took place at Leamington.

JOHN WILLIAM STANLEY, of the firm of Stanley and Hyde, timber merchants, Wisbech, was twice Mayor of Wisbech in 1878-9 and 1879-80, and during his year of office received the presentation of a silver cradle in honour of the addition of a daughter to his family. He was also Alderman, Justice of the Peace for the Borough, Charity Trustee and Governor of the Grammar School. He died on March 25th, 1897, and was interred in the Borough Cemetery.

WILLIAM HUTCHINSON, who died on December 13th, 1897, was Mayor of Wisbech in 1863, and for several years a member of the Corporation. In the memorable "Battle of the Dams," in 1855, when the silting up of the river necessitated the forcible removal of the Waldersey and Guyhirn Dams, erected by the Nene Valley Commissioners, Mr. Hutchinson was one of the members of the Corporation present, and Mr. Hutchinson's brothers,



Messrs. S. K. and J. T. Hutchinson, contractors, of March, superintended the removal of those obstructions in the river, and were subsequently arrested for their share in it. During Mr. Hutchinson's Mayoralty, provision for a better supply of water for the town was the subject of a Parliamentary enquiry, and Mr. Hutchinson with Mr. G. Dawbarn, Ald. Wherry, and others, represented local interests in obtaining powers to form the Waterworks Company. Mr. Hutchinson was one of the first directors of the Company, a position which he held up to the time of his death. He was also a director of the Wisbech Lighting Company, and took part in several public movements for improving the sanitation and general healthiness of the town. He was deacon of Ely Place Baptist Church with which he had been long associated. The interment took place at the Borough Cemetery, on the 17th December, and was attended by a large number of friends and townsmen, the Rev. W. E. Winks, of Cardiff, conducting a part of the service.

ROBERT BENNETT, Deputy Town Clerk of Wisbech, and the confidential helper of Mr. Francis Jackson, who was Town Clerk for more than half-a-century, died on November 2nd, 1897, at the age of 76. His knowledge of matters connected with the municipal administration of the Borough, as well as of questions affecting the river, made his services of considerable value to the Corporation, and his opinion was generally regarded as sound and safe to follow. He gave useful help to local institutions and managed the North Cambridgeshire Hospital accounts, besides supervising the investments with a care which has materially added to the stability of its resources. He was secretary and treasurer of the Chess Club at the Working Men's Institute, and was a player of exceptional excellence. He was also a prizeman of the Draughts Club, and by acting as returning officer and in other ways gave much useful assistance to that institution. There was a very large attendance of public representatives and others at his funeral on November 5th, in the Leverington Road Cemetery.

HENRY HAMPDEN ENGLISH, J.P., founder of the firm of English Brothers, timber merchants, died at Westwood House, Peterborough, on November 11th, 1897, at the age of 83, and was buried at Duddington, near Stamford. Four years previously Mr. and Mrs. English celebrated their golden wedding, and Mr. English received a presentation from his *employés* on that occasion. He commenced business in 1843, taking over Mr. Jecks' yard at Wisbech, and afterwards went into partnership with his younger

brother and Mr. Joseph Harrison. When they retired, he founded the firm of English Brothers, and in 1883, after 40 years of business life, he practically retired in favour of his sons and heads of departments, who have since converted it into a Limited Liability Company. Mr. English formerly owned a fleet of six fine sailing vessels, before iron steamers were available for timber cargoes, and with a view to accommodate these vessels and develop the trade of the Nene, in 1875 he co-operated with Mr. G. F. Young in obtaining Parliamentary powers for constructing a dock at Sutton Bridge. These efforts resulted in the opening of a dock of 13 acres, but, unfortunately, the principles on which it was constructed proved to be wrong, and it became useless, in which condition it still remains. His early career was associated with the beginning of railways, and the connection of his firm and family with some of the Baltic exporters extended over nearly a century. His integrity and honourable conduct in all business matters was proverbial.

WILLIAM GROOM, J.P., died on February 15th, 1898, at Wisbech, at the age of 67. He was a member of the Corporation for nearly forty years, and was elected Mayor in 1866, Alderman in 1871, on the death of Mr. Richard Young, and subsequently appointed Justice of the Peace for the Isle of Ely and Borough of Wisbech. During his professional career, he attended three epidemics of cholera in Wisbech, and held the position of Medical Officer for nearly all the districts in the Union at different times, and for the Wisbech district during the long period of thirty-seven years. He served the office of President of the Cambs. and Hunts. Branch of the British Medical Association. He was chosen a County Councillor for the Central Division of Wisbech, and was also a North Level Commissioner. He was Director of the Water and Lighting Companies and of the Public Hall Company, and for several years was President of the Wisbech Liberal Association. His interment took place in the Borough Cemetery.

WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, J.P., died on October 20th, 1898, at his residence, Stag's Holt, March, at the age of 64. He was recognised as a high authority upon all agricultural questions, and was Assistant Commissioner to the Duke of Richmond's Commission on Agriculture from 1879 to 1882, making most valuable reports upon the state of agriculture in many counties. In 1891 he was appointed by the Labour Commission to be Senior Assistant Commissioner to enquire into the condition of the agricultural labourer, Lord Derby remarking that no agricultural

enquiry would be complete without his assistance, and his report is regarded as the leading treatise on the subject. From 1893 to 1895 he was a member of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, and took an active part in the preparation of its voluminous report. He was for seven years Chairman of the Isle of Ely County Council, and early in 1898 was presented with a silver tea service and chiming timepiece (as well as a handsome silver bowl for Mrs. Little) "as a slight acknowledgment of his devotion to the public service." The subscribers included the Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Bedford, Viscount Cobham, Mr. W. T. Long (Minister of Agriculture), Lord Rendel, Sir Robert Giffen, &c. He was for a time Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Party and had been invited to become the candidate for the Wisbech Division. He was Chairman of the Income Tax and Land Tax Commissioners, President of Wisbech Chamber of Agriculture in 1876 and 1887, and a member of several drainage bodies. His interment at Coldham Church on the 25th October was attended by a large number of members and officials of public bodies, including representatives of the Duke of Devonshire, Duke of Bedford, and Mr. C. T. Giles, M.P.

In addition to those more directly associated with Wisbech, the death has taken place during 1898 of Mr. Henry Trevor, of The Plantation, Norwich, who was a native of Wisbech, and Mr. Robert Haselwood, manager of Messrs. J. and J. Colman's works, to whom reference is made in the early part of this work.

In concluding this chapter, we may briefly refer to some of those esteemed citizens or residents in the neighbourhood who are still active and useful in the discharge of public duties for the benefit of their fellow men. Mr. Henry Sharpe and his brother, Mr. F. N. Sharpe, have both served the office of High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire and Hunts., and in Isle and Borough matters, in the administration of justice, or in municipal work, have rendered valuable services. Alderman Ford, five times Mayor of Wisbech, a Magistrate for the Borough, and Chairman of the Nene Navigation Commissioners (Third Division), has been during a large portion of his life a promoter of the best interests of the town and neighbourhood. Other Mayors, who have occupied the chair for less periods, generally one to three years, have discharged the official duties with energy and the civic hospitalities with courtesy and liberality. Their names are recorded in the list of Mayors to be found in the appendix, and are they not inscribed in letters of gold on the Mayor's chain, which will endure, it is to be hoped, as long as Wisbech exists as a municipality?

## CHAPTER XXV.

## RETROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE.



ANOTHER fragment of old Wisbech has gone," was the regretful remark of an inhabitant as he watched some time ago, the demolition of certain ancient shops and dwelling-houses in High Street, Wisbech. A century and a half ago, on the site of these premises, which had been occupied by Mr. J. Kennerell and Mr. J. T. Maxey, Mr. Quinton, of St. Ives, put in what was regarded in his day (about 1750) as a very handsome shop front, with those "bull's eye" windows which are still seen in old houses. Mr. Stanroyd, a vendor of leather buskins and gloves, paid a rent of six guineas (!) for these renovated premises. He was succeeded in the business by his son, who was so disturbed in his mind by a proposal of the late Mr. Henry Ollard to put in plate glass, a hundred years later, that he brought out from a hoard, carefully laid up in two old stockings, a thousand golden guineas, in order to purchase the property, the rent of which had, of course, greatly increased by that time. This second Mr. Stanroyd was a man of penurious habits, and he lived to the age of a hundred. As a writer of 1855 has remarked, the rates of that year were considerably more than the rents of a hundred years before, and what would he said of the rates of to-day in comparison? But the advantages that are now enjoyed must not be overlooked in making such a contrast. The features of the town have marvellously changed since the days of "bull's-eye" glass. In 1750 we are told there was a windmill in

the centre of the Market Place and a large pond in the Old Market, whilst an open sewer, not over fragrant, one may imagine, occupied the north side of High Street. Even to-day there are some ancient remains of those primitive days in the shape of buildings which have not yet succumbed to the commercial requirements of the age, and are deserving of the attention of the antiquarian, as links which attach the past with the present. Among the oldest of such houses in Wisbech, the George Inn, the back portion of which is in the Market Mews, opposite the *Advertiser* Office, is worthy of notice. The outside gable, towards the Mews, contains traces of very old oak buttresses of good workmanship, with an oak bressemer and roof supports, which have become displaced by the decay of time. These are partially hidden from sight, but the oak cill and supports of the lower window with the brackets, indicate ancient and good woodwork in days when wood was more plentiful in the district than bricks. Another example of an old but noticeable gable is to be found in the barber's shop kept by Mr. Rogers, in Bridge-street. Some timber work of ancient date is observable in the covered passage dividing Mr. Simmons' premises from the *Advertiser* Office, but most of the more ancient buildings, which have not been re-built, are so modernised and altered as to retain but few indications of their original construction. The old order of things has given place to new, and to present-day developments. Well-paved and properly cleansed roadways, attractive and convenient business establishments, rapid communications from place to place, sanitary facilities which reduce sickness and promote health, all these compare favourably with the condition of the town even fifty years ago, and tend to make Wisbech a healthy and agreeable place of residence. Even within the memory of those living, three stagnant and unwholesome ponds have disappeared, viz., Deadman's pond, and pools on the Lynn and Elm Roads, which were in the midst of residential property, and a source of danger to the health of dwellers in their respective neighbourhoods. As a consequence of sanitary improvements, the death-rate is abnormally low, and the standard of health improved by the absence of serious epidemics. A large number of new and convenient houses have been built, not only surrounding the Park, but also on the Queen's Road, where the sale of building land by the executors of the late Mr. John Gardiner was followed by the development of the Colville Building Estate with the opening of new roads by Mr. John Baker. In this neighbourhood more than a hundred convenient residences have been built. These are in

the immediate neighbourhood of the Great Eastern Railway Station, which is a new and commodious building in the style of the domestic architecture of the last century. There is another station which needs re-building and enlargement, that of the Midland and Great Northern Joint Line, on the north side of the river, and it is understood that a new station is contemplated. The approach to the town is through a pleasantly shaded road, past the back of the Lord Lieutenant's grounds, and into the town through the Old Market Place, an open space often used for fairs or public exhibitions. Altogether, Wisbech has an appearance of steady advancement, and it would not be surprising if at the next census it should be found that there had been an appreciable increase of its population, owing to the many developments that have been undertaken during recent years.

Before bringing this work to a close, some personal changes of an important character have taken place which may be noted in this last chapter. Mr. Richard Bunbury Dawbarn, who revised the earlier sheets and was keenly interested in its preparation has passed away, and also the late Deputy Town Clerk, Mr. Robert Bennett, whose remains have been followed to their last resting place in the General Cemetery by a number of townsmen, including the Mayor and Corporation, the Lord Lieutenant, and the late Town Clerk, to whom he had been so many years a faithful servant. Mr. Francis Jackson has resigned the office of Town Clerk, and the legal affairs of the Borough are now in the capable hands of Mr. George Carrick. One or two changes have taken place in the constitution of the body of Governors of the Grammar School, and a draft amending scheme is now submitted to the approval of the town, by which it is proposed by the Charity Commissioners to appoint two Governors from the Isle of Ely County Council, a step intended to ultimately combine Secondary Education with the work of the school. The scheme further contains a "conscience clause" as to the religious instruction of certain pupils, and throws open to other colleges than Magdalen College, Cambridge, one of the four scholarships. The Presidency of the Institute has undergone a change since the earlier pages were written, Mr. F. J. Gardiner having been unanimously chosen to succeed Mr. Ward Layle, who had expressed a wish to retire. Mr. Layle was subsequently presented with a gold watch as a memento of his services as President. The assessment of the Union is undergoing revision, caused by the appointment of Mr. R. Eve to value breweries, licensed houses, orchards and market gardens.

Satisfactory evidence of the quality of land in and near Wisbech, for the purposes of fruit and floriculture, and particularly the growth of bulbs, is to be found in the recent auction sales, at which high prices have been realised. One firm from Bristol has purchased land at a remarkable price, because of its adaptability to successful bulb growing. Orchard land at the same sales and since also realised in some cases over £200 per acre, the bidding being particularly spirited. In fact, the cultivation of flowering bulbs now covers a considerable area at the present time, and is likely to increase. Not many years ago, bulbs were very little cultivated in England, an idea prevailing that they could be only successfully grown in Holland, but it is found that, after comparison with those from over the sea, the bulbs from this district are superior in solidity, weight, and free blooming qualities to the Dutch. From one well-known Wisbech farm, many thousands have been planted in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, which for size and beauty favourably compare with those from abroad. Fruit from this locality is also of excellent quality and ripens earlier by some days than in many other parts of the country, and these are advantages which are undoubtedly materially increasing the value of land in the neighbourhood. Such hopeful indications of growing prosperity may also ultimately tend to improve the value of agricultural land, which has been lately obtaining decidedly better prices. In the direction of Murrow, the opening up of a large brick and tile yard with a considerable depth of clay available, promises to develop another industry of value to the district.

The new Grammar School, mentioned in the earlier part of this work, has made considerable progress since reference was made to it on page 235. The school has not only been completed and occupied, having been opened by the Mayor (Ald. Farrow), in January, 1898, but a determined effort has been made to raise funds for the erection of the central block, comprising dining room, additional dormitories, baths, and other arrangements essential to the completeness of the school. The ladies organized a two days' bazaar, which was opened on October 4th, 1898, by the Mayor (Ald. Farrow). The Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, who is Vice-Chairman of the Governors, presided, and Mr. C. T. Giles, M.P. for the Wisbech Division, was also present, a large company supporting the efforts of the Ladies' Committee, of which Mrs. Gay was President, and Mr. A. W. Poyser, Secretary. This, with the amateur dramatic entertainment following it, and several additional donations, has realised from £300 to £350,



*From a photograph by H. R. Mehen, Wisbech.*

**DRINKING FOUNTAIN IN THE OLD MARKET.**

ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF MR. & MRS. G. D. COLLINS, OF WISBECH, BY THEIR DAUGHTERS.

PRESENTED TO THE CORPORATION, JUNE 17TH, 1897.

INSCRIPTION: "HONEST WATER, WHICH NE'ER LEFT MAN I' THE MIRE"—*Timon of Athens*.



*From a photograph by J. B. Bennett, London.*

**NEW GRAMMAR SCHOOL, SOUTH BRINK.**

OPENED JANUARY, 1898, BY THE MAYOR (ALD. FARROW).

FOUNDATION STONE LAID BY THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE.



THE  
P. S. 10  
100

towards a sum of £1500 or £1600 which will be required to complete the scheme. Judging from the energy of Wisbechians in the past, in the removal of difficulties which hinder progressive developments, the erection of this completing link between the old and new portion of the Grammar School, will not be long delayed. The ivy-clad building in Hill Street, formerly the Grammar School, and also the ancient Town Hall, is at present offered for purchase.

With regard to the number of licensed houses in the Borough of Wisbech, Supt. Dockerill, Deputy Chief Constable of the Isle of Ely, reported at the Brewster Sessions, in August, 1898, that there were 49 fully-licensed houses (one more than in the previous year, the Albion Inn having been removed from the Division into the Borough), 21 beerhouses, 1 out-door license, 3 brewers, and 5 grocers' licenses, making altogether 79 licenses. In the Wisbech Division of the Isle of Ely, the same officer reported 35 fully-licensed houses, and 21 beerhouses, making 56 licenses. An influential deputation having waited on the Borough Justices at Wishech drawing attention to the serving of drink to children of tender age who were employed as messengers to the public-houses, the Magistrates issued a request that such children should not be served, and in reply to the Mayor, Supt. Dockerill stated that this wish had been fairly well carried out. This is a step in the right direction, and it may be hoped that further efforts will be made to minimise the temptations to old as well as young, and to encourage habits of sobriety in the town and neighbourhood.

So much for the past and present. Now, what shall be said of the uncertain future? There are, we fain would hope, still brighter days in store for our ancient borough and the neighbourhood. The spirit of altruism is abroad, and how many agencies are there, at the present time, which are employed for the welfare of our fellow men? Religious knowledge is increasing, missionary and evangelising organizations are more active than ever before, and the twentieth century ought to reap the fruits of the self-denying labours of Christian men and women of the past. If the fast waning century or so has produced Thomas Clarkson, the friend of the slave, William Ellis, the Missionary to the South Sea Islands and Madagascar, and other eminent Christian and philanthropic workers, should not the next century be even more fruitful in its results? Educational advantages are increasing on every hand, every facility is being given for the acquisition of knowledge in our schools, once maintained with difficulty by subscriptions, but now for the most part efficiently provided at the

public charge, and offered free of cost to the poorest. Art, science, and technical instruction, to enable the rising generation to meet competition with other countries on equal terms, are now brought within the curriculum which commands Government aid, and the system of continuation or evening schools, also subsidised by Government, offers to our Borough further advantages in that direction. Houses and streets are made more wholesome and cleanly, and there are to-day fewer dwellings unfit for habitation, although there are still some so dilapidated and unsanitary as to need to be improved out of existence. The Corporation, guided by a succession of energetic Mayors, and supported by men of public spirit and enterprise, has done much to make Wisbech healthy and pleasant from a residential point of view, and to attract business through its port and railways. The new river quays, or wharves, although they have proved costly, under judicious management may bring increased revenues, and attract by their facilities a growing import and export trade. There are still improvements that lie in the future which may one day be carried out. With a tidal river running through its centre, the youth of Wisbech ought to be as familiar with swimming as with skating, which, owing to better opportunities, is enjoyed by all classes in the winter. But the river is dangerous for bathers, and many a life has been lost for the want of swimming baths\*, which need to be provided, either from public or private resources, and which would be an acquisition from a health point of view. There are other less ambitious proposals which might be named and which are not less desired by many of the inhabitants residing in the more recently developed part of the town across the Park, and in Walsoken, viz., the widening and improvement of Blackfriars and Walsoken Bridges over the Wisbech Canal. One much-needed improvement has been provided, the erection of a new Grammar School, an undertaking that has been practically assured by the munificence of Mr. Peckover and his family, and this may possibly lead to the adaptation of the ancient building which once sheltered the Capital Burgesses of this Borough, and which is now offered for sale, to some useful purposes such as a Butter and Poultry Market (a want which ought to have been met years ago), or Rate Collectors' and Public Offices. Lastly, is there not a want among the sick poor of a Dispensary, from which, in consideration of a very small payment, medicines and

\* It is true swimming baths formerly existed where the Oil Mill, on the West Parade, now is, but they were not of adequate size and accommodation, and hence they proved a failure.

advice might be provided for those who are unable otherwise to obtain them? The Hospital is an inestimable boon to such as are able to leave their homes and become inmates of that institution, but in the absence of a system of out-door patients, neighbouring towns, where such patients are treated, are frequently resorted to, and those institutions are supported which give some advantages that are denied here. Possibly these and other developments may be recorded in the history which may appear some time in the next century. Our task, not by any means a light one, is now accomplished, and whilst we are fully conscious of its imperfections and insufficiency as an historical record, we trust that it may add to the knowledge of many who would otherwise be unacquainted with some of the events that have transpired during the latter half of the Nineteenth Century in the ancient, and, we hope, progressive Borough of Wisbech. May God ever prosper the good old town and its inhabitants in the future.

Our last words shall be those of James Russell Lowell :—

Life is a leaf of paper white,  
Whereon each one of us may write  
His word or two, and then comes—night.



## APPENDIX.



### WISBECH ST. PETER'S CHURCH,

#### AND ITS ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY.

SIR GEORGE GILBERT SCOTT, in 1855, made an examination of St. Peter's Church, and wrote an interesting paper on its architectural history, a copy of which is preserved in MS. in the Wisbech Museum, and from which, through the courtesy of Mr. G. Oliver, the Curator, we have been able to take some extracts. Canon Hopkins referred to this report (see page 242) when he read a paper, descriptive of Wisbech Church, before the Norfolk and Norwich Archæological Society in July, 1855, and quoted some of the observations of Professor Freeman and Sir G. G. Scott, as bearing upon the proposed restoration, which he remarked was about to be undertaken in a manner worthy of a building possessing so many striking features of interest. It was a curious coincidence that twelve years after Mr. (afterwards Sir) George Gilbert Scott made this report, his brother, Canon Scott, was appointed Vicar of the parish, and held the living for nearly 20 years. The extracts from the report, which was dated April 21st, 1855, are as follow:—

As regards its Architectural History, I am led to conclusions differing a little from those arrived at by Mr. Freeman in his very able paper read before the Archæological Institute, but not to such an extent as to affect the practical course I would recommend. My first impressions were the same as Mr. Freeman's, viz., that the single roof covering the double span was erected at the same time with the addition of the south nave (in the 14th century), though I was perplexed at finding it, not only supported by an arcade of much later date in the centre, but also by a late clerestory on the north side. I could imagine one of these supports being inserted by shoring up the already existing roof, but that this should be the case with two of the three supporting walls seemed to be, to say the least, perplexing.

The question was, however, at once settled by seeing the eastern gable as viewed from between the roofs of the chancel and south chapel. These, Mr. Freeman had not the opportunities of seeing. We have there clear marks of a gable terminating the north or original nave. This would afford no evidence of itself, as to the question under consideration, as it might be the remains of the gable which existed before the erection of the south nave; but, on examination, it is clearly of the same age with the roofs of the chancel and south chapel in

the same age with the south nave. Again, the gable in question stands over the chancel arch, which arch was built at the same time with the south nave, and it itself contains a window of the same age with that arch. On examining, too, the interior of the side of this gable over the south nave, I find that its present line of inclination cuts off the head of a small window which once existed between it and the roof of the south chapel. All this evidence tends distinctly to prove that the single gable comprising a double span, is the result of an alteration of subsequent date, and that at the time of the erection of the south nave, the two naves had their own separate roofs. The probable history, then, up to that period, would be something of this kind. The church would have been at first of Norman, or partly of Transitional date, and have consisted of a narrow nave with north and south aisles, an engaged western tower standing on three sides on arches; a chancel with at least one (a south) aisle. The nave would have a low clerestory. The tower may or may not have been completed. During the Fourteenth Century, however, this original form was greatly altered. A south nave with an aisle of its own, was substituted for the original south aisle of the nave; a lofty chapel for the south aisle of the chancel, and a large and wide chancel for the original small and narrow one. The tower (or what existed of it) still remained, as probably did the old south arcade (with its clerestory now become internal) the old nave roof and the north clerestory, the eastern gable of the old nave being re-built with the chancel arch which carried it, and the new nave having its own roof. The north aisle was also widened at this period. At some period considerably later, another great alteration was undertaken. The western tower (or the idea of completing it) was done away with, its upper walls and eastern arch were taken down, a great perpendicular window inserted in its western wall, and its side arches left as part of the nave arcades. At the same time the south arcade of the Norman nave with its (now internal) clerestory being found to encumber the interior, were removed, and a much lighter and loftier arcade was substituted. The Norman clerestory on the north side was for some reason re-built, and (owing probably to the inequality of the two nave roofs) the double nave was covered with the single roof which we now see. The stair-turret of the tower was converted into a bell-turret, on the western gable, either to receive the sanctus bell or as a substitute for a larger belfry during the temporary absence of the tower—a want amply supplied early in the Sixteenth Century by the erection of the present massive detached tower on the north side.

There are two points on which my examination of the church did not enable me to make up my mind. First, as to the date of the last-named alteration; and second, as to that of the flat timber ceiling, by which I find that the roof was concealed in the interior.

The most natural supposition would be, that the old tower was taken down at the same time they intended to build a larger one, which would throw the whole of these alterations as late as the time of King Henry VIII. I confess, however, that the construction of the roof looks earlier than that time, and more especially so does the turret on the western gable. I should have mentioned that some parts of the turret on the western gable have the appearance of Fourteenth Century work. These may possibly be made up from older fragments, and the turret certainly looks internally as if made up in this way, or as if it had been, at some time, rebuilt; or it is possible, that if, as Mr. Freeman thinks, the western tower was never completed, the turret may have been carried up during the Fourteenth Century, for the temporary reception of a bell, and reconstructed partially when the wide gable was erected. On the other hand, the flat ceiling has moulded joists, similar in section to those of the floor which covers the lower storey of the present tower, so that if it can be proved that the ceiling and roof must have been constructed together, the entire alteration must clearly be of the Sixteenth Century.

It is therefore a matter of some curiosity to discover whether the ceiling is coeval with the roof or inserted subsequently to it, a question which I think a careful examination may settle.

Mr. Gilbert Scott then proceeds to deal with the practical question, whether the wide roof existing at that time should be retained, or the older arrangement of two roofs reverted to; and whether, in case the present roof be retained, the timber ceiling below it should be restored, or the roof thrown open to view. He advises the retention of the roof alluded to, because of preserving one of the most remarkable features of the church; and upon the second question recommends, for a like reason, the restoration of the flat timbered ceiling, and not its destruction.

## WISBECH CASTLE

### AS AN ECCLESIASTICAL STATE PRISON.

In two volumes, recently issued by the Camden Society, entitled "*The Archpriest Controversy*, Documents relating to the Dissensions of the Roman Catholic Clergy, 1597-1602, edited from the Petyt MSS. of the Inner Temple by Thos. Graves Law, Librarian of the Signet Library, Edinburgh," the following passages occur in reference to the disturbances at Wisbech Castle referred to on pages 9 and 10 of this work:—

Wisbyche was accounted the most conspicuous place for Catholiques in England. In February, 1595, began the notorious "Wisbech Stirs." Father William Weston, who had been confined in Wisbech Castle for many years, declared himself disgusted with the levity and loose behaviour, drunkenness, dicing, &c., of his clerical fellow-prisoners, and, with the approval of Garnet, his superior, he accepted the title of "Agent" from eighteen of his companions, and drew up rules for a more regular mode of life, to which, it was hoped, all would conform. Dr. Bagshaw and Bluet, at the head of a minority of ten or twelve, protested against this assumption of superiority and declared the imputation upon which it was grounded to be a base calumny. Weston withdrew with his friends into separate chambers, and there ensued a violent quarrel which created a scandal throughout the whole Kingdom. In November, Dr. Dudley and Mush, "the pacificator," effected a temporary reconciliation. But, presently, after some months of wrangling, there was once more a complete rupture, which continued for the next three years. On November 17th, 1600, a formal appeal to the Holy See was drawn up at Wisbech and signed by thirty-three priests. As a result of an inquiry by the Privy Council, at the following Christmas, thirty-six prisoners at Wisbech were removed to Framlingham Gaol. The pulpits of England are said to have rung with the clamour of the Wisbech Stirs, and Medley, keeper of the Wisbech Prison, kept the Privy Council informed of particulars of the feud.

## THE FRUIT-GROWING INDUSTRY.

### APPROXIMATE QUANTITY OF FRUIT SENT FROM WISBECH STATIONS IN 1898.

The bulk of fruit grown in the neighbourhood of Wisbech, and dispatched by rail to the principal markets, was very large, although the season was unfavourable to apples, pears, and plums. Goose-



berries were very abundant, and strawberries a fair crop. For the four months, June, July, August, and September, the Midland and Great Northern Joint Line conveyed 3,980 tons of fruit by goods trains and 230 tons by passenger, making 4,210 tons by this line only, against 4,400 in 1895, which was a record year. For several weeks, 60 to 91 tons per day were sent, whilst on the heaviest day 125 tons left by this line for the market. The Great Eastern Railway has also sent 60 tons per day away. Of course, the companies' staffs are largely augmented during the fruit season, and the vans collect over an area extending about 14 miles across. Special fruit trains are run to London, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Leeds, and Sheffield. Mr. H. C. Fisher has the supervision of this traffic for the Midland and Great Northern Joint Station, and Mr. D. Bowker for the Great Eastern Railway.

### COMMISSIONS OF SEWERS.

PAPER CONTRIBUTED BY MR. J. R. BAMBRIDGE, ASSISTANT CLERK  
TO THE WISBECH COMMISSION.

The following interesting particulars of the Commissions of Sewers, which are of great antiquity, were contributed to the *Shepherds' Magazine*, in 1897, by Mr. Bambridge. Mr. Henry Sharpe, J.P., of Leverington House, has been appointed to succeed the late Mr. J. H. Chamberlin as Chairman of that ancient body:—

#### COMMISSIONS OF SEWERS.

If you take a map of the counties of Cambridge, Lincoln, and Norfolk, and with a pair of compasses make a circle (with Wisbech for the centre), say for a radius of about twenty miles, you would include an area which owes much to Commissions of Sewers. The various members of the earlier Commissions are rightly considered the pioneers of drainage, which has so developed, that great marshes, fens, and meres have been brought into cultivation, and the land being of great fertility may be, without any stretch of imagination, termed the garden of England. Commissions of Sewers are of great antiquity, and date from an early period of English history. They were issued by the Sovereign for the purpose of inquiring into the causes of inundations, and the necessity of repairing sea banks, in order that means might be taken to protect the land from the inroads of the sea. The crudeness of the ancient works of drainage, and the inadequacy of the defences constructed by the inhabitants of the country, led to the granting of these Commissions, whose duty, also, it was to see that the proper repairs were executed, and to whom power was given to make laws, decrees, and ordinances for the future maintenance of the works. The first statute for the appointment of these Commissions appears to be in the time of Henry III., and various statutes were passed in the subsequent reigns of Henry VI., Edward IV., and Henry VII. The whole law relating to Commissions of Sewers which is in force at the present time is founded on the great statute of Henry VIII., A.D. 1531, known as the "Bill of Sewers," in the preamble of which it is recited: "Our Sovereign Lord, the King, like a virtuous and most gracious prince, nothing earthly so highly weighing as the advancing of the common profit, wealth, and commodity of this his realm, considering the daily great damages and losses which have happened in many and divers parts of this his said realm, as well by the reason of the outrageous flowing, surges, and course of the sea in and upon marsh grounds and other low places,

heretofore, through politic wisdom, won and made profitable for the great commonwealth of this realm, as also by occasion of land-waters and other outrageous springs in and upon meadows, pastures, and other low grounds adjoining to rivers, floods, and other water-courses; and over that by and through mills, mill-dams, weirs, fish-garths, kedels, gores, flood-gates, locks, and other impediments in and upon the same rivers, and other water-courses to the inestimable damages of the commonwealth of this realm, which daily is likely more and more to increase unless speedy redress and remedy be in this behalf shortly provided," etc. The "form" of the Commission is given in the statute, and the same has ever since been used for the granting of like Commissions, and the following is an epitome. After reciting substantially the foregoing preamble, it proceeds: "We, therefore, for that by reason of our dignity and prerogative royal, we be bound to provide for the safety and preservation of our realm of England, willing that speedy remedy be had in the premises, have assigned you, and six of you, to be our justices" for the following amongst other purposes—to survey and remedy annoyances—to enquire by whose defaults the annoyances come, etc.—to assess the persons contributory to the charge—to repair defences—to appoint bailiffs and collectors—"to arrest and take as many carts, horses, oxen, beasts, and other instruments necessary, and as many workmen and labourers as for the said works, and reparations shall suffice, paying for the same competent wages, salary, and stipend in that behalf; and also to take such and as many trees, woods, underwoods, and timber, and other necessities as for the same works, and reparations shall be sufficient at a reasonable price"—to make statutes and ordinances—to award writs and precepts to sheriffs to summon jurors—and to compel obedience to their orders "by distress, fines, and amerciaments, or by other punishments, ways, or means." Subsequent Acts of Parliament defined and, in some cases, extended the powers of Commissioners of Sewers; but it has been well observed that if full effect had been given by the courts of law to the very wide powers conferred by the statute, there would have been but little need for the considerable amendments in the law in the years 1833 and 1861, or for the large number of private drainage Acts which testify to the limitation of authority set to the statute. Down to the year 1833, all laws, decrees, and ordinances of Commissioners of Sewers were recorded in the Court of Chancery.

Among the various Commissions of Sewers which owe their origin to the Act of Henry VIII., and one which is still in active existence, is the Commission of Sewers for the Hundred of Wisbech and parts adjacent, although its jurisdiction has been somewhat curtailed in consequence of not being able, by reason of the limitation of authority before mentioned in matters of internal drainage, to effect the improvements needed by the erection of new works. This, no doubt, was the primary cause of the neighbourhood becoming honeycombed with a great number of Drainage and Navigation Acts. The late Sir John Cooke, in a report to the Duke of Bedford, in the year 1874, stated that with regard to the River Nene, from Peterborough to the sea, a distance of about thirty-one miles (this is the river which runs through Wisbech), he found it was under the jurisdiction of fourteen different sets of Commissions, viz.:—Three over the channel, five over the north bank, and six over the south bank. The Commissioners of Sewers have jurisdiction over seven miles of the river bank on the north side, and four miles on the south side, above and below the town; parts within the town on either side being repaired by the Corporation or private owners. Large areas are still under the jurisdiction of the Commissioners, the later Acts having extended the powers of Commissioners with regard to internal works. These are divided into districts, and each maintains its own works; an acre shot being levied over the whole area, 23,000 acres for the working expenses of the Commissioners. Among the Drainage Acts affecting districts formerly under the jurisdiction of the Commissioners of

Sewers may be mentioned the "Wisbech Northside" (1775), under which the internal drainage and improvement of 6,600 acres of land in Wisbech and Wisbech St. Mary is regulated, the "Leverington, and Leverington Parson Drove" (1801), 5,500 acres, and the "Tid and Newton" (1771), 7,000 acres.

Under the Act of Henry VIII. it will be observed that the Commissioners are called justices, and as such hold courts, when necessary, a general session being usually held each year. A precept is issued to the sheriff to summon all Commissioners, Dikereeves, and Expenditors, as well as twenty-four good and lawful men of the said Hundred to serve on the jury, then and there to inquire, &c. The court having been opened by the "crier" and the chairman chosen, the jury are sworn by the clerk and then "charged" by the chairman. The charge is usually a review of the doings of the court during the past year, a general statement of the condition of the banks of the river, the drainage of the districts, the finances and the works considered necessary in the coming year. After the examination of the various accounts, the jury proceed to "crave" the various rates, and the same being embodied in their "verdict," are read in open court by the clerk and declared duly made by the chairman saying after each rate, "Be it so." The rates thus laid can only be quashed by the Court of Queen's Bench.

It is hoped this ancient and honourable court, having now for centuries played an important part in all matters affecting the River Nene and of drainage in the near adjoining districts, will continue its usefulness as a check upon all crude schemes, but as an effective assistant in all matters deemed useful and advantageous to the country at large and this "Hundred" in particular.

## PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

### IN THE COUNTY OF CAMBRIDGE AND THE WISBECH DIVISION.

Cambridgeshire for 171 years—from 1660 to 1831—returned only two Members, but the Reform Bill of 1832 gave the county an additional Member. Three were, from that time, chosen on the "three-cornered" principle, voters being only allowed to record their votes for two out of the four or more candidates, the minority usually obtaining one representative at a General Election. In 1885, a further change was made when Cambridgeshire was allotted one member for each of three divisions, which were named as follows:—1, Northern or Wisbech Division; 2, the Eastern or Newmarket Division; 3, the Western or Chesterton Division. The numbers of electors in Cambridgeshire were as follows in the years named:—1832, 6,500; 1868, 9,502; 1874, 10,012; 1884, 9,951; 1885, Wisbech Division, 9,532; Newmarket Division, 8,936; Chesterton Division, 10,465; total in Cambridgeshire, 28,933; 1895, Wisbech Division, 10,495; Chesterton Division, 10,651; Newmarket Division, 9,738; total in Cambridgeshire, 30,884.

The following are the elections that have taken place during the last 235 years in this county:—

### COUNTY OF CAMBRIDGE.

Population 164,459.

1660 Thomas Wendy	1722 Sir J. H. Cotton, Bart. . . . .	1518
Isaac Thornton	Lord Harley . . . . .	1449
1701 Sir R. Cullen	Sir F. Whichcote . . . . .	949
Lord Cutts	Sir R. Clarke. . . . .	918

- 1761 Lord Granby (T.) . . . 1739  
 Hon. P. Yorke (T.) . . . 1444  
 ———  
 Sir C. Gideon, Bart. (W.) . 1028
- 1790 Charles Yorke (T.)  
 J. W. Adeane (W.)
- 1802 (Bye-Election in May *vice* Adeane,  
 deceased).  
 Sir H. Peyton, Bart. (W.) . 1592  
 ———  
 Lord C. Manners (T.) . . . 1500
- 1802 Lord C. S. Manners (T.) . . 1941  
 Hon. C. P. Yorke (T.) . . . 1435  
 ———  
 Hon. Thos. Brand (W.) . . . 559
- 1807 Lord C. S. Manners (T.)  
 Right Hon. C. Yorke (T.)
- 1826 Lord C. S. Manners (T.) . . 1394  
 Lord F. G. Osborne (W.) . . 897  
 ———  
 H. J. Adeane (W.) . . . . 627
- 1830 Lord F. G. Osborne (W.) . . 2339  
 H. J. Adeane (W.) . . . . 2086  
 ———  
 Lord S. Manners (T.) . . . 1757
- 1831 (*Vice* Osborne resigned).  
 R. G. Townley (W.) . . . 1980  
 ———  
 Capt. C. P. Yorke (T.) . . . 1447
- 1831 Lord F. G. Osborne (W.)  
 H. J. Adeane (W.) . . . . \*
- 1832 December 21st.  
 Yorke, Capt. C. P. (C.) . . . 3693  
 Townley, Richard G. (L.) . . 3261  
 Childers, J. W. (L.) . . . 2862  
 ———  
 Adeane, H. J. (L.) . . . . 2850
- 1835 January 19th.  
 Yorke, Hon. Eliot T. (C.) . . 3871  
 Eaton, Richard J. (C.) . . . 3261  
 Townley, Richard G. (L.) . . 3070  
 ———  
 Childers, J. W. . . . . 2979
- 1837 July 29th.  
 Yorke, Hon. Eliot T. (C.)  
 Eaton, Richard J. (C.)  
 Townley, Richard G. (L.)
- 1841 July 5th.  
 Yorke, Hon. Eliot T. (Prot.)  
 Eaton, Richard J. (Prot.)  
 Allix, John Peter (Prot.)
- 1847 August 9th.  
 Yorke, Hon. Eliot T. (Prot.)  
 Townley, Richard G. (Prot.)  
 Manners, Lord G. J. (Prot.)
- 1852 July 15th.  
 Yorke, Hon. Eliot T. (C.)  
 Manners, Lord G. J. (C.)  
 Ball, Edward (C.)
- 1857 April 6th.  
 Ball, Edward (C.) . . . . 2780  
 Adeane, H. J. (L.) . . . . 2616  
 Yorke, Hon. Eliot T. (C.) . . 2483  
 ———  
 Manners, Lord G. J. (C.) . . 2127
- 1859 May 3rd.  
 Ball, Edward (C.)  
 Adeane, H. J. (L.)  
 Yorke, Hon. Eliot T. (C.)
- 1863 February 14th. (Mr. Ball accepted  
 the Chiltern Hundreds).  
 Manners, Lord Geo. J. (C.)
- 1865 July 18th.  
 Manners, Lord G. J. (C.)  
 Royston, Viscount (C.)  
 Young, Richard (L.)
- 1866 July 17th. (Viscount Royston ap-  
 pointed Comptroller of the  
 Royal Household.)  
 Royston, Viscount (C.)
- 1868 November 26th.  
 Manners, Lord G. J. (C.) . . 3998  
 Royston, Viscount (C.) . . . 3874  
 Brand, Right Hon. H. B. (L.) 3300  
 ———  
 Young, Richard (L.) . . . . 3290  
 Right Hon. H. B. Brand,  
 Speaker of the House of  
 Commons, 1872 to 1884).
- 1874 January 3rd. (Lord Royston suc-  
 ceeded to Peerage as Earl of  
 Hardwicke).  
 Yorke, Hon. Eliot C. (C.)

1874 February 7th. Manners, Lord G. J. (C.) Brand, Right Hon. H. B. (L.) Yorke, Hon. Eliot C. (C.)	1881 September 6th. (Mr. Rodwell accepted Chiltern Hundreds). Bulwer, J. R., Q.C. (C.)
1874 October 5th. (On decease of Lord George Manners). Rodwell, B. B. H., Q.C. (C.)	1884 March 20th. (Sir H. Brand created peer—Viscount Hampden). Thornhill, A. J. (C.) . . . 3815
1879 January 30th. (On decease of Hon. Eliot C. Yorke). Hicks, Edward (C.)	Coote, Thos. (L.) . . . 2912
1880 April. Rodwell, B. B. H., Q.C. (C.) Brand, Right Hon. H. B. (L.) Hicks, Edward (C.)	In 1885, the Redistribution Act effected many changes, no less than 71 boroughs being merged into counties, whilst the counties were divided into single-membered divisions.

NORTHERN OR WISBECH DIVISION OF THE COUNTY  
OF CAMBRIDGE.

1885 Rigby, John (L.) . . . 3919 Selwyn, Capt. C. W. (C.) . . 3596 Majority . . . 323	1892 Brand, Hon. A. G. (L.) . . 4311 Duncan, S. W. (C.) . . . 4189 Majority . . . 122
1886 Selwyn, Capt. C. W. (C.) . . 4169 Rigby, John (L.) . . . 3082 Majority . . . 1087	1894 (Hon. A. Brand appointed Treasurer of the Royal Household). Brand, Hon. A. G. (L.) . . 4363 Sackville, Stopford G. (C) . . 4227 Majority . . . 136
1891 July 23rd. (Capt. Selwyn accepted the Chiltern Hundreds). Brand, Hon. Arthur (G.L.) . . 3979 Duncan, Surr Wm. (C.) . . 3719 Majority . . . 260	1895 Giles, Charles Tyrrell (C.) . 4368 Brand, Hon. A. G. (L.) . . 4145 Majority . . . 223

One *bon mot* in connection with the 1857 election deserves to be noted. At the declaration of the poll, one of the electors in the crowd wittily interposed: "Yorke, you've lost your Mauners!" (alluding to the defeat of Lord George Manners), to which Mr. Yorke smartly replied: "No, sir. You have lost *your* Manners; but I shall have to try and take care of my own."

The following table will show the expenses incurred by the respective candidates during the last four elections:—

	1891	1892	1894	1895
Brand, Hon. Arthur G. (L.) ...	£1458	£1256	£1432	£957
Duncan, Mr. S. W. (C.) ..	£1505	£1553	—	—
Sackville, Mr. Stopford (C.) ...	—	—	£1405	—
Giles, Mr. C. Tyrrell (C.) ...	—	—	—	£1319

Mr. Brand has thus expended £5,103 in his four contests. The three Conservative candidates expended £5,782 or £679 more than Mr. Brand, making a total for the four elections of £10,885. For comparison, the expenses of the whole county, in the memorable election of 1868, may

be quoted, with the cost per vote recorded, 4,772 votes being actually on the register:—

	Votes.	Cost. £	Per Vote. s. d.
Manners, Lord G. ... ..	3988	3386	16 11¼
Royston, Viscount ... ..	3874	3386	17 5¼
Brand, Right Hon. H. B. ...	3300	2900	17 7
Young, Richard ... ..	3290	2900	17 7½

£12,572

Population of Parliamentary Divisions in Cambridgeshire:—Wisbech Division, 49,556; Chesterton Division, 46,041; Newmarket Division, 48,878.

MR. JOHN RIGBY, now Lord Justice Sir John Rigby, was the first member for the Wisbech Division. He was elected as a Liberal representative in 1885, by a majority of 323, over Captain Selwyn, but lost his seat after the introduction of the Home Rule Bill, in 1886, by 1,087, his former opponent, Captain Selwyn (C.), being returned. In 1892, he was returned for Forfarshire by a majority of 866; and in August of the same year, on his appointment to the Solicitor-Generalship, was returned unopposed, and subsequently received Knighthood. Later he was made Attorney-General, and finally, in November, 1894, attained to the Judicial Bench, being created a Lord Justice of Appeal.

CAPTAIN CHARLES WILLIAM SELWYN, of Selwyn Court, Richmond, Surrey, and Eastwood, March, was the eldest son of the late Right Hon. Sir Charles Jasper Selwyn, Lord Justice of Appeal, by Hester, fifth daughter of Sir John Ravenshaw, and widow of Dr. Thomas Dowler. He was born in 1858, and educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. He was an officer of the Royal Horse Guards Blue, and served with distinction during the Egyptian Campaign. Captain Selwyn married Isabella Constance, daughter of Mr. F. G. Dalgety, of Lockerley Hall, Romsey. Captain Selwyn purchased Eastwood, March, after his election, and erected a large assembly room, Selwyn Hall, which has since been removed to Wisbech. This building was fitted with electric light, heating apparatus, and every convenience. Captain Selwyn resigned, owing to ill-health, in July, 1891, and died, after a lingering illness, in Auckland, New Zealand, on March 1st, 1893, whilst on a tour for the benefit of his health.

THE HON. ARTHUR GEORGE BRAND is the third son of Viscount Hampden, who was formerly M.P. for Cambridgeshire and Speaker of the House of Commons for twelve years, 1872—84. Mr. Brand was born in 1853, and was private secretary to Mr. Arnold Morley, M.P., when the latter was Secretary to the Treasury, in 1886. He is a magistrate and D.L. for Sussex, and a director of several successful companies. He married Edith, daughter of Mr. Joseph Ingram, J.P., of Brooklands, Cheshire, whose gift of song has been of good service to her husband during his election contests. In recognition of her services Mrs. Brand was in January, 1893, presented with a diamond tiara, and an illuminated address in book form, by her husband's constituents. Mr. Brand in 1891 defeated Mr. Duncan, of Horsforth Hall, Leeds, by 260; and in 1892 by 122. On his appointment to the office of Treasurer of

Her Majesty's Household, an office which embraced the duties of Assistant Liberal Whip, Mr. Brand was opposed by Mr. S. G. Stopford Sackville, of Thrapston Hall, but he was again returned by a majority of 136. In the General Election of 1895, Mr. Brand lost his seat, Mr. C. Tyrrell Giles defeating him by 223.

MR. CHARLES TYRRELL GILES, the present Member for the Division, of Copse Hill House, Wimbledon, and 2, Hare Court, Temple, is son of the late Mr. Alfred Giles, President of the Institute of Civil Engineers and M.P. for Southampton, by his marriage with Jane Emily, youngest daughter of the late Mr. John Coppard, of Hastings. He was born on February 2nd, 1850, and educated at Harrow (where he was captain of the school eleven in 1868 and 1869) and at King's College, Cambridge, where he graduated B.A. in 1875, proceeding to M.A. in due course. While at the University he was captain of the cricket and football teams of his college in 1872, and president of the King's College Athletic Club. Adopting the law as a profession, he entered as a student at the Inner Temple, and was called to the Bar in 1874, when he chose the Western Circuit. Mr. Giles, who married in 1881 Isabella, daughter of the late Mr. Jeremiah Colman, Carshalton Park, has always taken a prominent part in political life, being Chairman of the Wimbledon Conservative Association from 1890 till 1895. He was from 1893 till 1895 Chairman of the Wimbledon and Putney Common Conservators. Mr. Giles edited the third edition of Cunningham on Elections, 1885. The hon. member belongs to the Carlton and St. Stephen's Clubs. It may be added that his father, Mr. Alfred Giles, M.P., gave evidence as a civil engineer on the Wisbech Dock and Railway Bill, before Parliament in 1884, to which reference is made on page 39.

Among Members of Parliament associated with Wisbech and the Isle of Ely, may be mentioned Sir Thomas George Fardell (a native of Wisbech) M.P. for South Paddington, and son of a former Vicar of Wisbech (mentioned on page 412) of whose career we append a few particulars.

SIR THOMAS GEORGE FARDELL, K.B.; created 1897; J.P., Chairman of Isle of Ely Quarter Sessions, Conservative M.P. for South Paddington 1895; London County Councillor for South Paddington since 1889. Born in 1833, and youngest son of the late Rev. Henry Fardell, Canon of Ely and Vicar of Wisbech, and Eliza, eldest daughter of the late Right Rev. B. E. Sparke, Bishop of Ely. Sir George Fardell married Letitia Anne, only daughter of the late Henry Swann Oldfield, B.C.S., 1862. He was educated at Eton and Christchurch, Oxford, taking his B.A. in 1856. He is a Barrister at Lincoln's Inn, 1862, and West Norfolk Circuit, and was appointed Registrar in Bankruptcy, Manchester, 1868. Since 1868 he has been engaged in Municipal work; represented Paddington in Metropolitan Board of Works; was instrumental in obtaining Royal Commission thereon in 1888, and subsequently in passing into law the Public Bodies Corrupt Practices Act, 1889. He was twice put forward for the post of Deputy-Chairman of the London County Council. Sir George Fardell has travelled in America and Canada, and his recreation is shooting. He is a member of the Carlton Club, and lives at 26, Hyde Park Street, London.

## LORD LIEUTENANTS OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

Earl of Hardwicke, K.G., to 1873.

Charles Watson Townley, M.A., 1874 to 1893.

Alexander Peckover, LL.D., F.R.G.S., appointed November 29th, 1893.

## CUSTOS ROTULORUM OF THE ISLE OF ELY.

Henry J. Adeane, M.P.

Charles Watson Townley, M.A.

Duke of Bedford, appointed 1874.

Lord de Ramsey, appointed 1891.

## HIGH SHERIFFS OF CAMBS. AND HUNTS.

Amongst the High Sheriffs of Cambridgeshire and Hunts. have been the following:—

1856	Mr. James Gay, Upwell	1893-94	Mr. Arthur J. Thornhill, Diddington Hall, Hunts.
1880	Mr. R. C. Catling, Elm	1894-95	Major Edward H. Greene de Freville
1886-87	Mr. T. M. Vipan, Sutton	1895-96	Mr. F. N. Sharpe, Wisbech
1888-89	Mr. J. J. Briscoe	1896-97	Mr. E. T. Hooley, Papworth Hall
1889-90	Mr. Arthur W. Marshall	1897-98	Mr. Frederick Crisp, Willingham
1891-92	Mr. W. H. Hall, Newmarket		
1892-93	Mr. Henry Sharpe, Leverington		

## CLERKS OF THE PEACE.

Hugh Jackson, to February, 1852

Charles Metcalfe, March, 1852, to August,  
1867

Frederic Morehouse Metcalfe, August,  
1867, to October, 1893

Edwd. H. Jackson, appointed Dec., 1893

## BISHOPS OF ELY.

1812-36	Bowyer Edward Sparke, Bishop of Chester, the last Bishop possessed of Palatine jurisdic- tion over the Isle of Ely.	1864-73	Edward Harold Browne, Canon of Exeter, and afterwards Bishop of Winchester.
1836-43	Joseph Allen, Bishop of Bristol, under whom the Diocese was extended beyond Cambridge- shire.	1873-83	James Russell Woodford, Vicar of Leeds, under whom was founded the Ely Theological College.
1845-64	Thomas Turton, Dean of West- minster.	1885	Lord Alwyne Compton, Dean of Worcester.

## VICARS OF WISBECH.

1587	Matthew Champion	1773	John Warren
1613	Joshua Blaxton, B.D.	1779	James Burslem, LL.D.
1615	Thomas Emerson	1787	Hon. and Rev. C. R. Lindsey
1630	Edward Furnis	1795	Cesar Morgan, D.D.
1651	William Coldwell	1802	Abraham Jobson, D.D. Died in December, 1830.
1702	John Bellamy, A.M.	1830	Henry Fardell, M.A., Canon of Ely. Died at Ely, March, 1854.
1714	Thomas Cole		
1721	Henry Bull		
1749	Henry Burrough, LL.D.		



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School, to Radama II., King of Madagascar, which gifts were cordially acknowledged by the King.\* Mr. Ellis visited Wisbech in 1867, when he lectured again on Madagascar, and was entertained at breakfast in the Lecture Room, Public Hall, under the presidency of Dr. Howson, who was then Vicar of Wisbech. Mr. Ellis subsequently retired from missionary work, and died at his residence at Rose Hill, Hoddesdon, Herts., on the 9th of June, 1872, at the age of 77. A portrait in oils of Mr. Ellis was presented to the Working Men's Institute by Mr. Jonathan Peckover, and is placed in the Hall of that Institution. The Museum contains specimens of Chinese, Japanese, Burmese, Siamese, and Malagasy costumes, presented by the Rev. W. Ellis, having been obtained in the course of his missionary journeys. Mrs. Ellis, wife of the Rev. William Ellis, was the authoress of the once popular *Mothers of England*, *Wives of England*, and kindred works. She belonged to the Society of Friends at first, and afterwards to the Congregationalists, and kept a flourishing school for the future "Wives of England," about whom she wrote, at Rawdon House, Hoddeston, Hertfordshire, a handsome Jacobean residence built in the reign of James I., afterwards visited by Charles I., and, later still, tenanted by Richard Cromwell. Mrs. Ellis wrote altogether about forty books.

ROBERT WHERRY, J.P., four times Mayor of Wisbech, died on February 14th, 1873, at the age of 64 years. He had been 25 years a member of the Corporation, having been returned in 1848, and elected Mayor in 1854, 1868, 1869, and 1870. Mr. Wherry was chosen an Alderman in 1858 on the resignation of Mr. Charles Metcalfe, and a Magistrate in 1869. In 1871 he was invited to take part in the opening of the International Exhibition, and was presented to the Prince of Wales on that occasion. He was also a Guardian of the Poor and Chairman of the Board, Charity Trustee, Trustee of the North Cambs. Hospital, Chairman of the Nene Navigation Commissioners, Treasurer of the Public Hall Company, Director of the Gas and Water Companies, &c. He had taken a very active part in the erection of the new Baptist Church and Schools in Ely Place, the opening of which was fixed to take place the day before his death, but was postponed to the following month. In his public duties he guided the affairs of the town with great discretion and judgment, at a

\* A photographic portrait of the late Radama II., taken by the Rev. W. Ellis, is hung in the Working Men's Institute committee-room. It shows the King in military dress, with his crown on a table.

time when strong party feeling was exhibited, and he was chosen Mayor in 1868 because of his conciliatory and judicious handling of contentious matters. For thirty-two years he was a deacon of Ely Place Church, and nearly thirty years its Sunday School superintendent. He was a consistent and active Nonconformist in times when men were called upon to suffer for their conscientious convictions, and on one occasion, having refused to pay Church Rates from conscientious motives, his goods, and those of Mr. George Reed and Mr. G. F. Lilley, were sold by auction on the Market Place to meet the claim. The respect of his fellow citizens for Ald. Wherry's memory was shown in the large gathering around his grave in the Leverington Road Cemetery on the 20th of February, 1873, when the Corporation and other public officials, with the officers and members of Ely Place Church attended. Subsequently a handsome granite obelisk was erected to his memory. An appreciative sketch of his life and Christian virtues was afterwards published, entitled, *Work Here, Rest Beyond*, written by the Rev. Edward Carey Pike, B.A., and in a small work, entitled, *A Pastoral Medley*, by the Rev. W. E. Winks, a former Minister of Ely Place Chapel, he pays the following tribute to his worth:—

An Alderman of the Borough, a Justice of the Peace, four times elected Mayor, he never allowed his honours and duties to spoil his interest or check his zeal in the work of the Church and Sunday School. It is safe to say that no man in the town or county to which he belonged did more to win respect for religion in general and for our Nonconformist and Puritan type thereof in particular than Robert Wherry.

HENRY LEACH was Town Bailiff in 1835 when the Princess Victoria, now Her Majesty the Queen, passed through Wisbech with her mother, the Duchess of Kent, on their way from Stamford and Peterborough to visit the Earl of Leicester at Holkham. On behalf of the Capital Burgesses and the Town, Mr. Leach presented the Royal visitors with a copy of Colonel Watson's *History of Wisbech*, which is referred to in a previous chapter describing the reception of the Princess. Mr. Leach was the first Mayor elected after the passing of the Municipal Act, and twice subsequently, in 1839 and 1847, occupied the Mayoral chair. He was also a Guardian of the Poor. His death took place on June 28th, 1873, at his residence in Upper Hill Street, at the age of 75, and a number of his townsmen attended his funeral in the Church Cemetery. A portrait of Mr. Henry Leach, presented by his family, is in the Council Chamber.

of Wisbech. Whilst he was Mayor, Mr. Young received a silver cradle on the occasion of the birth of a son during his year of office, and a silver trowel when laying the foundation stone of the Chapel of Ease at Walsoken. Mr. Young was made an Alderman, also Magistrate for the Isle of Ely and Norfolk, and was associated with the inauguration of the Volunteer movement. Mrs. Young presented the Corps with the Queen's Colours and bugle, and Ensign Young was among the first officers presented at Court in uniform. On the retirement of the Hon. Eliot Yorke from the representation of Cambridgeshire, Viscount Royston, the present Earl of Hardwicke, came forward, and Mr. Richard Young also announced his intention to become a candidate in the Liberal interest. The intimation was received with surprise, by the constituency, especially in the parts of the County where Mr. Young was not so well known, but after canvassing a few days, his candidature aroused such a response, that Mr. H. J. Adeane, from health considerations, who had been the Liberal representative for eight years, thought it desirable to retire. Mr. Young was consequently returned unopposed on July 18th, 1865, having Lord George Manners (since deceased), and Viscount Royston, afterwards the Earl of Hardwicke, father of the present Earl, as his colleagues. He sat in the House of Commons for three years, and during that time was entertained by his constituents at a complimentary banquet at the Public Hall, Wisbech, given in commemoration of his obtaining Parliamentary honours. About 200 gentlemen were present, including Mr. Guildford Onslow, M.P. for Guildford, Mr. Clare Sewell Read, M.P. for East Norfolk, Mr. G. H. Whalley, M.P. for Peterborough, and Mr. J. Wyld, M.P. for Bodmin. When the General Election of 1868 was approaching, the Liberal leaders believing that two seats might be secured, conferred with Mr. Young, who induced Mr. Henry B. Brand, then M.P. for Lewes, afterwards Speaker of the House of Commons, to join him in contesting the county. A heated and prolonged contest followed, and the struggle was much more severe and bitter than is usual at these contests. When the polling day arrived it was found that Lord George Manners (3998) and Viscount Royston (3874) the Conservative representatives, and the Right Hon. H. B. Brand (3,300) Liberal, were elected, and Mr. Richard Young (3290), was 10 votes behind. The loss of his seat was an intense disappointment to Mr. Young, who had not calculated upon such an issue. Mr. H. Brand was equally disconcerted, and though himself elected, declared that he would have done anything to secure Mr. Young's election in place

of his own. The southern part of the County, around Royston and Newmarket, had evidently plumped for Mr. Brand, whose connection with Lord Dacre's family made him popular in that locality. This protracted and fiercely fought election extended over nearly four months, commencing early in August, and the poll being taken on November 24th, 1868. During its progress, on September 28th, a remarkable demonstration took place, when 200 country gentlemen and farmers, mostly on horseback, as well as some in carriages, met the Conservative candidates, who were driven into town in a carriage and four, with postilions in pink, the party colours. It was intended that the procession should return from the Great Eastern Station, after welcoming Lord George Manners and Viscount Royston, through Timber Market, but hearing that some opposition was possible, the Gaol Lane (now Queen's Road) route was taken instead. On arriving in Bridge Street Square, a crowd, disappointed at the change of route, offered some resistance to the passage of the horsemen. In the *mélée* that followed, Deputy-Lieutenant Taylor was knocked down, and the crowd being exasperated by the course of events, refused to hear the Conservative candidates speak from the Rose and Crown windows, a great uproar resulting. A counter demonstration afterwards took place by the Liberals, who dragged Mr. Brand and Mr. Young through Timber Market. Some roughs taking advantage of the prevailing excitement, broke a number of windows and became riotous and destructive. Litigation followed in the County Court, and Mr. Young was sued for the damaged property, the contention being that when he was raising his hat in acknowledgment of the cheers of his supporters, he was really encouraging the mob to break the windows. Judge Cooke gave a verdict for the plaintiff, a furniture dealer named Peacock, who had his windows broken, and ruled that Mr. Young, by waving his hat, abetted the rioters in their deeds of violence. Mr. Young appealed against this decision, and Mr. Justice Hawkins, who was then a Q.C., and appeared for Mr. Young, convulsed the Court by opening the case as a question of "waiver," an allusion to Mr. Young raising or waving his hat. The Court of Queen's Bench reversed the decision, and the whole of the costs of the litigation, which had lasted nearly twelve months, fell on the plaintiff and his friends. Mr. Young, after losing his seat for Cambridgeshire, tried to win one for King's Lynn, appearing at a bye-election, as a Liberal candidate against Lord Claude Hamilton, the present Chairman of the Great Eastern Railway. The declaration of the poll in December, 1869, resulted however, in his defeat once more

by the narrow majority of 19 votes, the poll being :—Lord C. J. Hamilton, 1051; Richard Young, 1032. Mr. Young was for several years a director of the Great Eastern Railway, and proposed Viscount Cranborne (the present Marquis of Salisbury) when he was elected Chairman of that Board. His knowledge of shipping matters was of great service to the Company in the development of its Continental steamboat service, the first sea-going vessel passing through the new water-way to the Maas by the Hook of Holland, being the "Richard Young" steamer, named by the Company after him, in recognition of his services. Mr. Young was also a Deputy Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, Chairman of the Peterborough, Wisbech, and Sutton Railway, and a Liveryman of the Loriners' and Fruiterers' Companies. Mr. Young was elected Sheriff of London and Middlesex in company with the late Sir Francis Truscott, but his death took place at his London house two days after he was sworn in, under circumstances referred to at the opening of this biographical notice. His funeral took place in Walsoken Church, on October 21st, 1871, the coffin having been brought from London. There was a very large following of his friends and townsmen, his State carriage and insignia of office as Sheriff of London and Middlesex forming part of the procession. The Rev. Dr. Cox, Sheriff's Chaplain, conducted the service, and preached a sermon on the following day in Walsoken Church, which was published. Mr. Young was 63 years of age. Subsequently a stained glass window was uncovered in Walsoken Church to Mr. Young's memory, and a subscription amounting to £400 was raised for the purpose of placing a portrait in the Council Chamber, and erecting a memorial column and drinking fountain in the Park. On April 3rd, 1872, in the Public Hall, Wisbech, the Right Hon. H. B. Brand, Speaker of the House of Commons, formally presented the portrait of Mr. Young, in his Sheriff's robes, to the Mayor (Ald. Ford), and Corporation. This portrait, which is by Mr. H. F. Creighton, of Sheffield, after having been exhibited for some time at the Guildhall, London, has been permanently located in the Council Chamber at Wisbech Town Hall. On October 31st, in the same year, the memorial column and drinking fountain erected in the Park, by subscription, was inaugurated by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Sills Gibbons, who was accompanied by Sir Francis Truscott and Sir John Bennett, ex-Sheriffs of London, Dr. Brady, M.P., Mr. Beard, under-Sheriff, Mr. Fildes, and others. The visitors were entertained to luncheon at the Rose and Crown Hotel previous to the ceremony, and were afterwards received at Osborne House by

Mrs. Young. The subscribers to the memorial included the Right Hon. the Speaker, The Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., Right Hon. John Bright, M.P., Right Hon. Hugh Childers, M.P., the Lord Mayor, Sir Edward Watkin, Bart, Dr. Brady, M.P., Ald. Lawrence, M.P. Mr. John Brown, J.P., was Chairman of the Committee, and the Rev. James Smith, the hon. secretary. The column was subsequently blown down in a high gale of wind and injured, but a committee was formed to restore it. With some slight alterations of design, the memorial has been reinstated, and greater stability given to it. Mrs. Richard Young, his widow, who proved a valuable helper to her husband in his upward career, still lives in Monica-road, Wisbech, and there is a large family of sons and daughters. Mr. Young's confidential helper in his shipping business, Mr. Thos. G. Beatley (Beatley and Son), of Leadenhall Street, London, has since become a steam-ship owner, and has been for many years a member of the City of London Corporation, representing the Aldgate Ward, as well as Chairman of the City of London Orphan Schools, and other responsible positions in the management of City affairs.

WILLIAM ELLIS, a well-known Christian missionary, though not actually a native of Wisbech was brought to Wisbech when four years of age, and received his early education here, being subsequently employed as a gardener in the neighbourhood. Afterwards he became a missionary to the South Sea and Sandwich Islands (1816-25), where he possessed considerable influence, as is recorded in *Watson's History of Wisbech*, which contains a sketch of his earlier life. Subsequently he represented the London Missionary Society in Madagascar, where he surmounted great difficulties, and was mainly instrumental in securing for that country, self-government, constitutional liberty, and religious freedom. He published a work recording the progress of religious work and civilization in that island. Mr. Ellis visited Wisbech in April, 1860, delivering an address on Madagascar, at which although Mr. Ellis was a Congregationalist, the Vicar (Canon Hopkins) Dr. Whitsed, and many prominent townsmen were present, and a collection was made on behalf of the Society with which he was so long associated. At the same time four missionaries, all belonging to Wisbech, met in the town, viz., Revs. W. Ellis, W. Shaw, Superintendent of Wesleyan Missions in South Africa, Henry Wilkinson and I. Stubbins, Baptist Missionaries in India. In January, 1862, the interest shown in Mr. Ellis' work was indicated by the clock presented by Wisbech residents, and an atlas from the Rev. G. Thompson, Master of the Grammar



School, to Radama II., King of Madagascar, which gifts were cordially acknowledged by the King.\* Mr. Ellis visited Wisbech in 1867, when he lectured again on Madagascar, and was entertained at breakfast in the Lecture Room, Public Hall, under the presidency of Dr. Howson, who was then Vicar of Wisbech. Mr. Ellis subsequently retired from missionary work, and died at his residence at Rose Hill, Hoddesdon, Herts., on the 9th of June, 1872, at the age of 77. A portrait in oils of Mr. Ellis was presented to the Working Men's Institute by Mr. Jonathan Peckover, and is placed in the Hall of that Institution. The Museum contains specimens of Chinese, Japanese, Burmese, Siamese, and Malagasy costumes, presented by the Rev. W. Ellis, having been obtained in the course of his missionary journeys. Mrs. Ellis, wife of the Rev. William Ellis, was the authoress of the once popular *Mothers of England*, *Wives of England*, and kindred works. She belonged to the Society of Friends at first, and afterwards to the Congregationalists, and kept a flourishing school for the future "Wives of England," about whom she wrote, at Rawdon House, Hoddeston, Hertfordshire, a handsome Jacobean residence built in the reign of James I., afterwards visited by Charles I., and, later still, tenanted by Richard Cromwell. Mrs. Ellis wrote altogether about forty books.

ROBERT WHERRY, J.P., four times Mayor of Wisbech, died on February 14th, 1873, at the age of 64 years. He had been 25 years a member of the Corporation, having been returned in 1848, and elected Mayor in 1854, 1868, 1869, and 1870. Mr. Wherry was chosen an Alderman in 1858 on the resignation of Mr. Charles Metcalfe, and a Magistrate in 1869. In 1871 he was invited to take part in the opening of the International Exhibition, and was presented to the Prince of Wales on that occasion. He was also a Guardian of the Poor and Chairman of the Board, Charity Trustee, Trustee of the North Cambs. Hospital, Chairman of the Nene Navigation Commissioners, Treasurer of the Public Hall Company, Director of the Gas and Water Companies, &c. He had taken a very active part in the erection of the new Baptist Church and Schools in Ely Place, the opening of which was fixed to take place the day before his death, but was postponed to the following month. In his public duties he guided the affairs of the town with great discretion and judgment, at a

\* A photographic portrait of the late Radama II., taken by the Rev. W. Ellis, is hung in the Working Men's Institute committee-room. It shows the King in military dress, with his crown on a table.

time when strong party feeling was exhibited, and he was chosen Mayor in 1868 because of his conciliatory and judicious handling of contentious matters. For thirty-two years he was a deacon of Ely Place Church, and nearly thirty years its Sunday School superintendent. He was a consistent and active Nonconformist in times when men were called upon to suffer for their conscientious convictions, and on one occasion, having refused to pay Church Rates from conscientious motives, his goods, and those of Mr. George Reed and Mr. G. F. Lilley, were sold by auction on the Market Place to meet the claim. The respect of his fellow citizens for Ald. Wherry's memory was shown in the large gathering around his grave in the Leverington Road Cemetery on the 20th of February, 1873, when the Corporation and other public officials, with the officers and members of Ely Place Church attended. Subsequently a handsome granite obelisk was erected to his memory. An appreciative sketch of his life and Christian virtues was afterwards published, entitled, *Work Here, Rest Beyond*, written by the Rev. Edward Carey Pike, B.A., and in a small work, entitled, *A Pastoral Medley*, by the Rev. W. E. Winks, a former Minister of Ely Place Chapel, he pays the following tribute to his worth:—

An Alderman of the Borough, a Justice of the Peace, four times elected Mayor, he never allowed his honours and duties to spoil his interest or check his zeal in the work of the Church and Sunday School. It is safe to say that no man in the town or county to which he belonged did more to win respect for religion in general and for our Nonconformist and Puritan type thereof in particular than Robert Wherry.

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WILLIAM PECKOVER, F.S.A., of Bank House; who died on May 12th, 1877, in his 87th year, was descended from a family one of whom had served in Cromwell's Ironsides, and who subsequently settled at Fakenham, Norfolk, where he joined the Society of Friends. One of his descendants, Jonathan Peckover, came to Wisbech in 1777, and founded the banking firm, until recently known as Gurney, Birkbeck, Peckovers, and Buxton in 1782, and died in 1833. He left a family of six sons and one daughter, the three sons who survived him being William Peckover, banker, of Wisbech; Daniel Peckover, wool-stapler, Bradford; and Algernon Peckover, banker, of Wisbech. Mr. William Peckover was thus the eldest surviving son of Mr. Jonathan Peckover, the originator of the Bank, which first commenced its business in High Street. Mr. Peckover was a man of antiquarian learning and tastes, and an F.S.A. He was one of the founders of the Wisbech Museum, of which he was President for many years, and contributed liberally to its endowment, besides being a donor to its collection, he and his brother purchasing Dr. Stanger's collection of minerals, and providing cases and appliances for other objects. The North Cambs. Hospital, British and Foreign Bible Society, and Working Men's Institute were also recipients of his liberality, the Hospital Endowment Fund receiving from him £2,000 in augmentation of Miss Trafford Southwell's generous gifts to that fund. At the Jubilee of the Isle of Ely Auxiliary Bible Society (Northern Division) on June 16th, 1863, Mr. William Peckover presided at the evening meeting, as the only survivor of the first supporters of the Auxiliary Branch in 1813, when it was established. His interment took place in the ground attached to the Friends' Meeting House, on May 17th, 1877.

MISS MARY ELIZABETH TRAFFORD SOUTHWELL, of Honington Hall, Grantham, who died on November 24th, 1879, was the elder daughter of Sigismund Trafford,\* and a generous benefactor to Wisbech. Its inhabitants owe a debt of gratitude to the munificent generosity of that lady for the foundation at her own cost, and substantial endowment, of the North Cambridgeshire Hospital, adjoining the Park. The two days are memorable in the annals of the Borough when the foundress herself laid the memorial stone in the presence of the Mayor and Corporation, magistrates, and a large number of inhabitants on the 16th

\* Though Mr. Trafford was entitled to take the name of Southwell he did not do so, but his daughter, Miss M. E. Trafford did, in obedience to her aunt's will.

October, 1872, and also, later, when the Hospital was formally opened and presented to the town by the same lady on the 2nd of October, 1873, the Mayor and Corporation, Volunteers, and Friendly Societies assisting in the ceremony. Luncheon was served after the opening at the Corn Exchange, the Mayor (Ald. Ford) presiding. The first patient was admitted on the 22nd of November, 1873. In addition to the gift of the site and the building, as well as the endowment of the Hospital (Messrs. Peckover, the Duke of Bedford, Mr. G. D. Collins and others contributing largely to the Endowment Fund) Miss Southwell gave £500 at the opening, and £500 in Wisbech Waterworks Shares for the maintenance of the Hospital grounds. From time to time, the Hospital Committee received, as long as she lived, further evidences of her interest in the institution she had so generously founded, and it may be mentioned that on March 23rd, 1875, a resolution was passed by the Committee acknowledging the gift by Miss Trafford Southwell of additional rooms at the Hospital erected at a cost of £1,400. Miss Southwell was a descendant of an old Wisbech family, and her paternal grandmother lived at Wisbech Castle up to her marriage, when she went to Dunton Hall, in Tydd St. Mary, in 1760. Several monuments to the Southwell family are to be found in the Parish Church. A work on the Bedford Level, supposed to have been the earliest book printed in Wisbech, in 1728, was written by an ancestor of Miss Southwell.

WILLIAM DAWBARN, of Elmswood, Liverpool, eldest son of Mr. Robert Dawbarn, J.P., was a resident in Wisbech for the first forty years of his life, associated with the firm of Dawbarn and Sons, and afterward's the proprietor of a cotton factory which was started in the town. He was for several years a member of the Town Council and was proposed for the Mayoralty, though not elected. He took an active part in promoting locally the sending of exhibits to the 1851 Exhibition, towards which Wisbech subscribed £67, and received an official Exhibition medal in acknowledgment of his services as secretary. He was one of the earliest to commence Sunday School work in Wisbech, starting a Sunday afternoon class in a room in Hill Street. He left Wisbech, about 1862, to take the business at Liverpool of his father-in-law, the late Mr. Yelverton, agent for Colonel Pennant, now Lord Penrhyn, at the Penrhyn Slate Quarries, Bangor, and under his management the business rapidly increased, comprising almost every branch of the building trade, until it became one of the largest of the kind in the country. He was elected a member

of the Liverpool Town Council, and took a great interest in religious and philanthropic movements. Mr. Dawbarn possessed considerable literary ability, and published *Studies from Blackstone*, *Lectures on a Variety of Subjects*, *Practical Hints to Young Men*, as well as other works. Mr. Thomas Craddock, one of the authors of a *History of Wisbech*, in his biographical sketch of *Charles Lamb*, writes:—

This work would never probably have been published but for one circumstance. "Mine own familiar friend," William Dawbarn, Esq., of Elmswood, Liverpool, found it necessary in the development of an extensive mercantile business at Liverpool, to establish a private Printing Office on his premises. Mr. Dawbarn used his Press during leisure intervals for printing lectures on *Government*, *Conduct and Example*, which he had delivered several years ago. When this work was finished, he offered the Press to me and I accepted the boon.

Mr. Dawbarn always retained his interest in Wisbech, and especially in the development of the port, long after he left to reside in Liverpool. The promotion of Mr. Usill's effort to obtain dock accommodation for the port, although not successful, must have cost him a considerable sum. For the interest he took in this effort to provide shipping accommodation at Wisbech, the acknowledgments of the Corporation were specially voted to Mr. Dawbarn. His death took place on May 26th, 1881, quite unexpectedly, from heart disease, he having visited Wisbech, apparently in good health, less than a week before. He was 61 years of age, and was interred in Anfield Cemetery, Liverpool.

JONATHAN PECKOVER, of Harecroft House, the youngest son of Mr. Algernon Peckover, died at the early age of 46 years, on February 8th, 1882. Only ten days previously he had presided at the eighteenth anniversary of the Working Men's Institute, of which he was the founder and always a generous helper in every possible direction. His decease came as a sudden and unexpected event, and was a terrible blow to the officers of the Institute, who had experienced the value of his practical advice and direction. Many an anonymous donation came from his purse to the Endowment Fund or Library Fund, of which only the officers were cognisant. He presented the chimes (the clock tower being presented by Miss Jane Peckover) as well as many other additions to the building, which to-day remind the older members of their first President. He was also a supporter of Temperance work, an advocate (in common with the members of his family) of Peace principles, and a most liberal helper of religious and philanthropic movements. He conducted with his brother, Mr.

Alexander Peckover, a Bible Class every Sunday in the Friends' Meeting House, and presided at the Centenary Celebration, in the Corn Exchange, of the founding of Sunday Schools. His funeral, simple and unobtrusive though it was, in accordance with the practice of the Society of Friends, evoked a remarkable demonstration of public feeling and regard for his memory, and as it was quite impossible to accommodate in the small grave-yard attached to the Meeting House the large numbers who wished to show their respect, in addition to the subsequent service held in the chapel, a memorial meeting was held on the evening after the funeral in the Institute Hall, under the presidency of Mr. James Long, the Vice-President of the Institute. Addresses were given by Mr. Theodore Harris, Mr. Fry, Mr. Simms, and other friends of the family. Subsequently, a subscription was made by the members of the Institute and other friends, and Mr. Forbes-Robertson was commissioned by the Committee of the Institute to paint in oils a portrait of their late President, which has since been placed above the platform in the Institute Hall. Mr. Peckover left legacies amounting to £3,000 to the Working Men's Institute, viz., £2,000 to the Building Fund, £1,000 to the Library Endowment Fund, as well as £1,000 to the North Cambs. Hospital. The following tribute to the memory of Mr. Jonathan Peckover appeared in a journal at the time of his decease:—

He was a large-hearted, earnest, intelligent man, whose sympathies went out into the world and prompted him to practical and useful work, and, although he naturally felt a deep interest in the town of Wisbech and the people who live there, he was yet wide enough in his views to include in his friendliness and charity, his human brethren in all quarters of the kingdom. He will be best known, and his memory held most green, as a matter of course, in connection with the Working Men's Institute, at Wisbech, in which he infused a large amount of interest, to which he contributed large sums of money to support it and make it of full use and service, and the members of which lose a friend who will be most difficult to replace. Such men as Mr. Peckover are few and far between, and they light up the dark chapters of this world's history, and make even cynics wonder. They tempt even the most bitter observer, the most confirmed hater of humanity, to believe in the existence of something mysteriously noble and good in mankind—they are the evidence of the Divinity within us all, and they act like beacon marks for the race, encouraging fainting spirits in their dreary march, and pointing out a goal that all good men may hope to reach. It is the most sad side of the story to know that Mr. Peckover was struck down in the middle of his useful life, and that his death was comparatively sudden. One day well: the next, gone to a reward he had richly earned! It is an

old saying that "whom the **gods** love die young," and in this case it seems strange that a man who **was** fulfilling such a nobly useful and unselfish life should have been taken from us when his experience and knowledge were in full fruition. He not only **thought** this sphere to be the battle ground for man's highest qualities, and **not** for the development of his worst passions, but he practically exemplified **that** belief in his every-day life. His reward came in the approval of a **good** conscience; his fame will go down the ages, not as one who discovered continents or fought battles, but of whom it may be said, as it was of Abou Ben Adhem, that he was one "who loved his fellow men."

WILLIAM PIKE BAYS, was a member of the ancient Corporation (the "Ten Men" presided over by the Town Bailiff), and was altogether 45 years a member of the old Corporation and the Town Council. He was made an Alderman in 1859, an office which he retained until his resignation through ill-health in 1877. He was widely respected by the members of the Benefit Societies, to whom he had been of great service throughout his life. In 1846, he was presented with a handsome silver salver, and in 1878, an illuminated address when he resigned the Treasurership of the Wisbech District of Ancient Shepherds. He died at Wisbech on March 12th, 1883, at the age of 85, and his funeral was largely attended by members of the Benefit Societies.

JOHN GARDINER, the founder and for thirty-eight years editor of the *Wisbech Advertiser*, Chairman of the Wisbech Board of Guardians and other public bodies, died on October 12th, 1883, in his 71st year. He started the *Advertiser* fifty-three years ago, on August 2nd, 1845, first as a monthly paper, and afterwards as a weekly and bi-weekly. The progress and development of that journal, which now bears the title of the *Isle of Ely and Wisbech Advertiser*, will be found more fully referred to on page 69 of this book, in the chapter on "Wisbech Newspapers Past and Present." For six years he was a member of the Corporation, and with Mr. George Dawbarn and Mr. Gapp, in Mr. Young's Mayoralty, was cited before the Court of Chancery in the memorable fight known as the "Battle of the Dams." The dismissal of the motion made on behalf of the Nene Valley Commissioners, by Sir W. Page Wood, afterwards Lord Hatherley, was the occasion of great local rejoicings. He was for twenty-four years a Guardian of the Poor, and ten years Chairman of that body, the necessities of the poor and the interests of the ratepayers being honestly and diligently cared for during the long period that he discharged those duties. He was also Chairman of the Assessment Committee, of the Wisbech General Cemetery Board, Hon. Secretary of the North Cambs.

Hospital, Hon. Secretary of the Wisbech Museum and Literary Society, Charity Trustee, member of the School Board since its formation in 1872, Chairman of the Wisbech and Isle of Ely Building Society, Governor of the Grammar School, Director of the Canal Company, and also of the Public Hall Company. Twice he visited the United States, and formed friendships to which he often referred with pleasure. A contributor to this work (the late Mr. R. B. Dawbarn) adds the following note to this brief sketch:—

Mr. Gardiner used to say facetiously that if all he knew, and all he did *not* know, were put into a book, the volume would be a very big one. But the amount of general information he did possess, was as his friends were aware, exceptionally large, as well as varied in character. He was an omnivorous reader, of which, as an illustration, it may be remarked that he read Chambers's Encyclopædia through in the volumes as they were first issued. His retentive memory made his mind a store-house of facts, which were brought out according to the needs of himself, his neighbours, or friends. His knowledge of literature made him a most valuable referee in connection with the Museum Library.

Mr. Gardiner was interred in the General Cemetery in the presence of many representatives of the public bodies with which he had been associated. For upwards of 40 years Mr. Gardiner regularly kept a diary, written in very minute shorthand in Taylor's system, and recording public and private events in connection with the town. These notes are not available, as the system is now out of date, and it is not easily decipherable.

JOHN GOWARD, Postmaster of Wisbech for 53½ years, died on January 3rd, 1884, in his 76th year. He was for some years a member of the Corporation, and was twice offered the Mayoralty, but declined it. During his Postmastership the position of the Post Office was changed five times, premises in Market Street, Union Street, Cornhill, South Brink, and Market Hill having been successively occupied, whilst since his decease a new Post Office has been built and occupied in Bridge Street. Great improvements were made in the postal service during that period, and he was, at the time of his death, one of the oldest officers in the service of the Department. The interment took place at the Leverington Road Cemetery.

THE VERY REV. JOHN SAUL HOWSON, D.D., Dean of Chester, was appointed Vicar of Wisbech St. Peter, and read himself in on May 19th, 1866. On resigning the Principalship of Liverpool College to become Vicar of Wisbech (having been previously



appointed Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of Ely) he was presented with a silver salver and cheque for 1,000 guineas, as well as candelabra and plate to the value of £250 from former pupils of the College. Dr. Howson, who succeeded Canon Hopkins, preached his first sermon in Wisbech Church on July 15th, 1866, on Ecclesiastes, II., 12, "What can the man do that cometh after the King? Even that which hath already been done." During the short time he held the living, Dr. Howson presided over the committee for provision of additional church accommodation in Eastfield, resulting in the erection of St. Augustine's Church on a site on the Lynn Road, of which he laid the first stone in May, 1868, receiving a silver trowel on that occasion. He was Chairman of the Science and Art Class at the Working Men's Institute, and presided at the breakfast given to the Rev. W. Ellis—the Madagascan missionary. During his residence at Wisbech he published *Scenes in the Life of St. Paul*, his reputation as a Biblical scholar and commentator having been previously established by the issue of a well-known work, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, in which he was associated with the Rev. J. Conybeare. He was also an interesting lecturer, and gave one at Wisbech, entitled "Popular Proverbs," as well as an address in connection with the Mechanics' Institute, on "Do your best where you are." In May, 1867, after holding the living for one year, he was appointed Dean of Chester by the Earl of Derby, and was installed in the following July, holding that preferment until his death at the age of 69, on December 15th, 1885, at Bournemouth, where he had been lying ill some time. He was interred at Chester Cathedral on the 19th December, under the shadow of the noble tower which, with the rest of the Cathedral, he had restored, in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, Mr. W. H. Gladstone, the Duke and Duchess of Westminster, and a number of personal friends. Mrs. Howson survived him only fifteen days, her death taking place on the 30th December, 1885, the consequence of a fall and the fracture of a bone.

REV. JOHN SCOTT, Rural Dean, Hon. Canon of Ely, and Vicar of Wisbech, died on June 17th, 1886, in his 77th year. He was brother of Sir George Gilbert Scott, R.A., the distinguished architect who pre-deceased him, and son of the Rev. Thos. Scott, incumbent of Gawcott, near Buckingham, grandson of the author of the well-known Commentary, Rev. Thos. Scott, Vicar of Aston Sandford, Bucks. Canon Scott formerly held the living of St. Paul's, Cambridge, and took his degree late in life, having first qualified himself as a doctor, and practised for ten

years in Hull before deciding to take Holy Orders. From Cambridge, he was appointed to the living of Tydd St. Giles, opening a mission church and school at the Foul Anchor, built by Mr. Richard Young, and contributing £600 to the restoration of the church. On leaving Tydd St. Giles, he was presented by his parishioners with a handsome epergne. On the appointment of Dr. Howson to the Deanery of Chester, he became Vicar of Wisbech in August, 1867, and held the living until his death, a period of nearly nineteen years. He secured the esteem of his parishioners of all denominations by his high Christian character and eminently generous, sympathising nature. He was Chairman of the Hospital Committee, of the School Board, Charity Trustees and National School Committee, and followed Dr. Howson in the chairmanship of the Building Committee for the erection of St. Augustine's Church, of which he nominated the first vicar—the Rev. A. J. Perry. In 1870, he was appointed to an honorary Canonry in Ely Cathedral, and at a subsequent date was made Rural Dean. The attendance at the funeral in the Church Cemetery, on the 23rd June, 1886, was a remarkable one, and demonstrated the esteem in which Canon Scott was held. The Mayor and Corporation, Charity Trustees, Bible Society, Museum, Board of Guardians, Working Men's Institute, Benefit Societies, and other public bodies were represented, and there was a very large attendance of parishioners, the spacious church, in which the first part of the service was held, being filled to overflowing. There had been no interment in Wisbech of a Vicar of the parish since that of Dr. Jobson in 1830. The death of Canon Scott's eldest daughter took place unexpectedly six weeks after her father's death. One of his sons has been appointed to a Vicarage at Tunbridge Wells, where Mrs. Scott, the widow of Canon Scott, is now living.

ROBERT DAWBARN, J.P., formerly Town Bailiff and a member of the Ten Men of the old Corporation, was head of the old-established firm of Dawbarn and Sons, of Wisbech, and was associated with a generation long past, having reached within a few weeks of his 90th birthday. His father, Mr. Richard Bunbury Dawbarn, was, in connection with Mr. Isaac Jacks, the founder of the Market Place business, and was Chairman of the Court of Requests, which was superseded by the County Court. Mr. Dawbarn was educated at the Grammar School under the Rev. Jeremiah Jackson, and he afterwards entered the business in partnership with his elder brother, who died in January, 1826, Mr. Thomas Dawbarn shortly afterwards joining the firm. In

connection with the construction of the London and North-Western line from Blisworth to Peterborough, the assistance Mr. Dawbarn gave in obtaining Parliamentary powers for the line was acknowledged by the presentation of a gold snuff-box by the directors. In 1858 Mr. Dawbarn was appointed a Borough magistrate, in conjunction with Mr. R. Young. He was a North Level Commissioner, Income Tax Commissioner, and a member of the Hospital, Museum, and Canal Committees, as well as a director of several companies. In October, 1869, a family gathering took place at the Public Hall to celebrate the golden wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Dawbarn, at which his children and grandchildren were present with a number of friends. On January 18th, 1875, Mr. and Mrs. Dawbarn were presented at the Public Hall by the friends of Hill Street Baptist Chapel with a handsome gift of books, in acknowledgment of services rendered to that cause, of which he was a deacon and generous supporter for more than sixty years. The presentation was made by the Rev. Henry Dowson, President of Manchester Baptist College, on behalf of the subscribers. Mr. Dawbarn died on June 5th, 1888, at his country residence at West Walton, and was interred in the Stafford Street Cemetery, Walsoken, amid many manifestations of respect and esteem.

ROBERT CHARLES CATLING, J.P., D.L., who died on October 13th, 1888, at the age of 76, was a successful agriculturist and breeder of stock. He was Chairman of the Isle of Ely Justices sitting at Wisbech, and at one time Captain of the March Rifle Volunteer Corps. In 1881 he served the office of High Sheriff of Cambs. and Hunts., and in 1871 was President of the Wisbech District Chamber of Agriculture. At a later period he was elected President of the Cambs. and Isle of Ely Agricultural Society. He was a Middle Level Commissioner, Income Tax Commissioner, and held other public positions in connection with drainage and other trusts. In 1885 Captain and Mrs. Catling celebrated their golden wedding, with festivities, at Needham Hall, Elm. His interment took place in Elm Churchyard.

REV. WILLIAM BONNER HOPKINS, B.D., Rural Dean, Canon of Ely, Vicar of Littleport, formerly Vicar of Wisbech, died on March 24th, 1890, aged 67. Born at Frampton, near Boston, his ancestors having been substantial farmers, he was educated at Wakefield, and afterwards entered as a student at Caius College, Cambridge. He took his degree as Second Wrangler and Second Smith's Prizeman a few days before he attained his 21st year. He was elected a Fellow and was afterwards appointed to the

curacy of Holy Trinity, Cambridge. In 1854, Mr. Hopkins was nominated to the vicarage of Wisbech by Bishop Turton, and, going to a dilapidated and almost empty church, won the confidence of the parishioners and obtained funds for a perfect and beautiful restoration of that edifice. The congregations increased and church work became more active. Mr. Hopkins was Chairman of the Board of Guardians and took an interest in benefit societies, helping them to improve their financial management. His health failing, he applied to Dr. Harold Browne, Bishop of Ely, for a lengthened leave of absence. Bishop Browne appointed him to a canonry of Ely Cathedral, and asked him, instead of retiring for a time, to accept, in exchange for the Wisbech Incumbency, the vicarage of Littleport, a less laborious and more lucrative living. On leaving Wisbech in October, 1866, Canon Hopkins was presented, on behalf of the subscribers, by Mr. Francis Jackson, with a splendid silver service, consisting of salver, candlesticks, bread basket, tea and coffee services. The salver bore an inscription, with an engraving of the Parish Church. A silver claret jug was presented by the Board of Guardians, of which he had been the chairman for many years, during a part of which a somewhat fierce controversy arose over the question of appointing a paid chaplain, the majority of the Board, however, uniformly outvoting the supporters of the proposal. A new parsonage was built for him at Littleport, and in 1868 he was appointed Rural Dean, and was made Proctor in Convocation in 1859, taking considerable share in the debates of the Lower House. He strove for nearly ten years to obtain the sanction of Convocation to the principle of a conscience clause in the management of Church of England Schools, and was a member, at different times, of several committees, notably, Chairman of the Committee on Intemperance, the promotion of temperance principles enlisting his help and sympathy. He published several works on Temperance from a Scriptural point of view, as well as sermons and addresses, and was an occasional contributor to periodicals. His health during the latter part of his life was precarious, and he died from heart disease. He married in 1858 the daughter of General Sir David Leighton, K.C.B. The interment in Littleport Cemetery on the 28th March, 1890, was attended by a very large concourse of people, Canon Hopkins, during his residence of 24 years in that parish, having won the esteem of all classes.

WILLIAM GODDARD JACKSON, of Wisbech and Duddington, Stamford, a Deputy-Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, died on the

31st of December, 1890, in his 87th year. He was in 1829 taken into partnership with his father, as a solicitor, on the South Brink, under the title of Jackson and Son, and after his father's death in 1852, Mr. George Duppa Collins joined the firm, which was then known as Jackson and Collins. This partnership was dissolved in 1858, from which time Mr. Jackson practised alone. He was a member of the Wisbech Corporation from 1835 to 1852, Clerk to several Drainage Boards, Lord of the Manor of Sutton Holland (Long Sutton, in Lincolnshire), Deputy-Steward for the Manor of Wisbech Barton, Chairman of Mrs. Wright's Charity Trust. For 48 years he held the Clerkship of the Court of Sewers for the Hundred of Wisbech, a body which has done important work in the drainage of the district. He was Superintendent Registrar of Births, Marriages, and Deaths for half-a-century, from 1837 to 1887, and for some years Clerk to the Wisbech Guardians. He was a generous supporter of charitable objects, a staunch Churchman, and when Cambridgeshire was a three-cornered constituency always entertained the members of the Yorke family who sought the suffrages of the electors of the Isle of Ely. In January, 1878, Mr. Jackson was presented with a silver candelabra and illuminated address by his Wisbech tenantry, as a mark of their esteem, on the completion of 50 years as a landlord, the presentation being made by Mr. Thomas Cockett, for over 25 years his tenant. Mr. Jackson was interred at Duddington, Northamptonshire, in which parish he was the principal owner of the soil, and for some years an occasional resident, as well as churchwarden. The family seat at Duddington is now occupied by his son, Mr. W. Goddard Jackson.

WILLIAM SMITH, High Street, Wisbech, who died on March 14th, 1891, in his 78th year, was at one time a member of the Corporation, and one of the first volunteers enrolled, continuing for many years an active member of that defensive force. In later years, except as a Charity Trustee and Director of the Museum, he had taken no part in public life. He was regarded as an authority on art questions, and almost in every past local exhibition of paintings and articles of *vertu* he was the moving spirit, arranging with admirable tact and skill the exhibits. On November 1st, 1881, he delivered an address on "Art as applied to Painting," to the Reading and Discussion Class of the Working Men's Institute, in connection with an exhibition of pictures in the Institute. The address was afterwards printed for private circulation. He enjoyed his retired life amidst a small but choice collection of paintings, comprising such masters as

Pyne, Stanfield, Müller, Etty, and others, and his rare specimens of *bric à brac*, which he was ever ready to show and to enlarge upon with a connoisseur's enthusiasm. Mr. Smith was interred in the Church Cemetery at Wisbech.

SAMUEL SMITH, Leverington Terrace, Wisbech, familiarly known to his many friends as "Philosopher" Smith, a complimentary allusion to his varied knowledge and love of scientific investigation, died on July 18th, 1892. He was born on February 28th, 1802, and was consequently in his 91st year. He was an ardent numismatist, possessed a very valuable collection of coins and tokens, of which he possessed an extensive knowledge, also valuable gems, a great variety of shells and entomological specimens, which Mr. and Mrs. Smith collected and critically examined under a powerful microscope constructed by himself. He was also an exceptionally skilled mechanic, as well as an adept in almost all wood and metal working tools, and in grinding and polishing his own specula lenses. He was a liberal patron of the Wisbech Museum, devoting much time in assisting Mr. Algernon Peckover in the arrangement of the objects and naming them. He was an amateur photographer for years before it became a fashionable pastime and many old and interesting photographs of Wisbech are in existence which indicate his ability in this direction. His good-humoured stories and conversation were always attractive to his friends, who never spent a pleasanter hour than when admiring his "curios" and exploring the mysteries of his "den" at Leverington Terrace, which was a treasure-house of rare and unique objects. His interment took place in the Leverington Road Cemetery on Friday, July 22nd, 1892. The Rev. W. E. Winks, in his work entitled *A Pastoral Medley*, thus writes of the late Mr. Smith as "My Philosopher Friend":—

A man of ample means and leisure, he had spent his time and gifts in out-door and in-door study, in collecting specimens, in the manufacture of scientific instruments. What was he? An astronomer? Yes, the best amateur astronomer I ever knew. When asked to show a particular nebula, cluster or double star, he would turn his 4-inch chromatic telescope upon it in a moment. A geologist? A mineralogist? A paleontologist? Yes, he had worked in the field and the laboratory, and made his own wonderful collection, every specimen of which he could name at sight. A conchologist? To be sure. Look at these drawers of beautiful shells, and is not his collection of land and fresh water shells of the Fenland in the Wisbech Museum to this day? Ask him to show you his Hemiptera, Lepidoptera, &c., but not unless you are prepared to go through with them all. See how his eyes sparkle if you bring him a rare Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Ancient British, Saxon, Danish, or English coin, to look at and name for you.

What are these tiny cabinets with their neat little drawers? Microscopic specimens—mineral, botanic, organic—prepared and mounted by himself, and shown in the fine microscope made with his own hands. Look at this little glass cistern full of ditch-water and its lenses at the end. Hear him discourse on the Rotifera, Amœba, Cheironymous Lava, "Dead as ditch-water!" I fancy I hear him say, "Why it's one of the liveliest things I know, is a glass full of ditch-water."

FREDERIC MOREHOUSE METCALFE, J.P., D.L., Clerk of the Peace and of the Isle of Ely County Council, of Inglethorpe Hall, Wisbech, and Julians, Buntingford, succeeded his father, Mr. Charles Metcalfe, in the office of Clerk of the Peace, in 1867, and had thus held it for twenty-six years. His father had previously held it for fifteen years, so that the appointment had been in the family for more than a generation. Mr. F. M. Metcalfe's tenure of office was associated with important changes in the government of the Isle of Ely. When in 1889 a new system of County Government was initiated by Parliament, Mr. Metcalfe took infinite pains and trouble to place arguments before the Government, which resulted in the maintenance of the ancient independent jurisdiction of the Isle of Ely. The organization of the new county administration threw a great amount of work upon the Clerk, and this ultimately affected his health, necessitating a prolonged holiday. Mr. Metcalfe's death took place on October 15th, 1893, while staying at Limmers Hotel, London, from congestion of the lungs, at the age of 65. He held several public appointments, but in no direction did he render more energetic service than in the Volunteer Movement. When the Wisbech Volunteer Corps was formed thirty-five years ago, he entered as a private, and advanced successively to the rank of Ensign, Captain, Major, and finally Lieut.-Colonel in command of the regiment. He was a Justice of the Peace for Norfolk, a Deputy-Lieutenant, Governor of the Wisbech Grammar School, Charity Trustee, and Secretary of the Wisbech Museum. He was Lord of the Manors of Walsoken, Metcalfe and Emneth Hagbech of the parts of Emneth and Walsoken, and Inglethorpe and of Ellingham, near Swaffham; and steward for the late Lord Lieutenant's Manor of Beaupré Hall, Outwell (Mr. C. W. Townley). On the occasion of his marriage with Miss M. F. Meetkerke, of Julians, he was presented by the Volunteers, whom he had formerly commanded, with a dress sword. The funeral took place from Inglethorpe Hall, the remains having been removed from London to his residence, and was attended by the Isle of Ely County Council, the Mayor and Corporation, Magistrates, Clergy, and Representatives of Public Bodies, the day, October 20th,

being that on which, two years before, the first Chairman of the same County Council (Mr. O. C. Pell, J.P.), of which Mr. Metcalfe was Clerk, was buried.

CHARLES WATSON TOWNLEY, M.A., of Fulbourn Manor, near Cambridge, Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, and formerly *Custos Rotulorum* of the Isle of Ely, died on October 17th, 1893. He was at one time Chairman of the Liberal party in Cambridgeshire, and in 1869 made the presentation of a testimonial to Mr. and Mrs. R. Young at a public dinner given to Mr. Young at Cambridge. When Mr. H. J. Adeane died, Mr. Townley succeeded to the office of *Custos Rotulorum* of the Isle of Ely, and on the death of the Earl of Hardwicke in 1874, the Lord Lieutenancy of Cambridgeshire was conferred upon him by Mr. Gladstone, the Duke of Bedford succeeding him in the office of *Custos*. Mr. Townley seceded from the Liberal party on the Home Rule question, and later became Chairman of the Liberal Unionist Association. Mr. Townley discharged the duties of his office with great courtesy and ability, and was very popular in the county, taking an active part in its business as an Alderman of the Cambridgeshire County Council, and in other official capacities. His last visit to Wisbech was for the purpose of opening a grand Volunteer Bazaar and Military Encampment at the Corn Exchange, on the 22nd September, 1892. His interment took place at Fulbourn, on Saturday, October 21st, 1893, the day after that of the Clerk of the Peace (Mr. F. M. Metcalfe), whose death had occurred two days previously to that of the Lord Lieutenant.

ALGERNON PECKOVER, F.L.S., of Sibald's Holme, had entered his 91st year when his death took place on December 10th, 1893. He was the third surviving son of Mr. Jonathan Peckover, the founder of Messrs. Gurney, Birkbeck, and Peckover's Bank, and was a partner in that firm. He was President of the Wisbech Museum for several years, and a liberal benefactor, his gifts during his lifetime to this institution amounting to upwards of £3,000. He erected a building for the enlargement of the library, effecting a great improvement, and furnished it completely for the reception of additional books; also he presented glass cases for the preservation of objects in the Museum, and gave many unique and valuable specimens to fill them. His interest in the Wisbech British Schools before the passing of the Elementary Education Act, was of the most practical and valuable kind, and not long before his death he showed his interest in educational matters by contributing £5,000 to a High Grade School of the Society of Friends at Laughton Park, near Reading. The Hospital and



Working Men's Institute were generously helped, and he contributed largely to the purchase of the Fry Library by the Bible Society. At one time, Mr. Peckover was a member of the Corporation, and was thrice elected Alderman, and subsequently succeeded Mr. William Peckover, his brother, as Borough Treasurer. He retired from the banking firm with which he had been long associated about two years before his death, and when he died at the mature age of 90, left behind him legacies to the Museum, North Cambs. Hospital, Working Men's Institute, Bible Society, and to the *employés* of the Bank. His personal estate was affirmed at £1,163;286. The interment took place in the graveyard attached to the Society of Friends' Meeting House on the North Brink, in the presence of a large number of his personal friends and fellow townsmen.

GEORGE DUPPA COLLINS, South Brink, who died on June 1st, 1894, was in his 91st year, and survived his wife scarcely five months. He was born in London, but had been resident in Wisbech for 64 years, having entered, at the age of 27, the office of Mr. Hugh Jackson, solicitor, and was subsequently taken into partnership. Upon the death of Mr. Hugh Jackson, the firm was known as Jackson and Collins, until about 1858, when the partnership was dissolved, and Mr. Collins practised separately. From 1837 to 1875, a period of 28 years, Mr. Collins discharged the duties of Clerk to the Wisbech Board of Guardians, and was succeeded by his nephew, Mr. James Duppa Collins. He was a generous contributor to the Hospital Endowment and Maintenance Funds, a liberal landlord, and a ready supporter of deserving institutions and objects. He was interred in Emneth churchyard, and his two married daughters, Mrs. Pocock and Mrs. Prankard, have erected a handsome memorial fountain in the Old Market, Wisbech, from the designs of Mr. Armitstead, R.A., to the memory of Mr. and Mrs. Collins.

COLONEL LANCELOT REED, J.P., D.L., of Graysmoor, Elm, died on the 1st September, 1894, within a few days of his 65th birthday. He served in the 4th Suffolk Regiment (Cambridge Militia) for 38 years, and commanded it for seven years until September, 1890, when he resigned. A handsome brass has been erected to his memory by his brother officers in the south aisle of Ely Cathedral, the plate bearing his crest and motto "*In Deo omnia*," with the following inscription:—

In affectionate remembrance of Colonel Lancelot Reed, J.P., D.L., of Elm, Wisbech, born 6th October, 1829; died 1st September, 1894. He served 38 years in the 4th Suffolk Regiment (Cambridge Militia),

and commanded from September, 1883, to September, 1890. Erected by the officers past and present.

Colonel Reed was a Justice of the Peace for the Isle of Ely, and presided over the Wisbech Bench for some years; Chairman of the Court of Sewers, and a County Councillor of the Isle of Ely.

RICHARD BUNBURY DAWBARN, formerly of Wisbech, and latterly resident at Leamington, died on April 10th, 1897, at the age of 64 years. He was the fifth son of Mr. Robert Dawbarn, J.P., and was for some years associated with his father, in the firm of Dawbarn & Sons. His lectures, entitled, "Wisbech in the Days of our Grandfathers," are published in this volume, and before his death he revised the proofs of those interesting reminiscences of bye-gone days. He was the author of the brief sketch of Wisbech in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and his literary and artistic attainments and wide range of general knowledge constituted him an authority upon many historical and topographical matters, one of his successful efforts in that direction being the paper read before the British Archæological Society, when it visited Wisbech, giving a description of Wisbech Castle. In all matters pertaining to art, Mr. Dawbarn was ready to help, whether in promoting the teaching under the South Kensington Department, or in encouraging Art and Industrial Exhibitions. Mr. Dawbarn was associated with many religious and philanthropic movements in Wisbech, until he removed to Leamington, when he was presented by the Hill Street Baptist Church, of which he was a deacon, with a copy of the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, at that time just re-published. His interment took place at Leamington.

JOHN WILLIAM STANLEY, of the firm of Stanley and Hyde, timber merchants, Wisbech, was twice Mayor of Wisbech in 1878-9 and 1879-80, and during his year of office received the presentation of a silver cradle in honour of the addition of a daughter to his family. He was also Alderman, Justice of the Peace for the Borough, Charity Trustee and Governor of the Grammar School. He died on March 25th, 1897, and was interred in the Borough Cemetery.

WILLIAM HUTCHINSON, who died on December 13th, 1897, was Mayor of Wisbech in 1863, and for several years a member of the Corporation. In the memorable "Battle of the Dams," in 1855, when the silting up of the river necessitated the forcible removal of the Waldersey and Guyhirn Dams, erected by the Nene Valley Commissioners, Mr. Hutchinson was one of the members of the Corporation present, and Mr. Hutchinson's brothers,

Messrs. S. K. and J. T. Hutchinson, contractors, of March, superintended the removal of those obstructions in the river, and were subsequently arrested for their share in it. During Mr. Hutchinson's Mayoralty, provision for a better supply of water for the town was the subject of a Parliamentary enquiry, and Mr. Hutchinson with Mr. G. Dawbarn, Ald. Wherry, and others, represented local interests in obtaining powers to form the Waterworks Company. Mr. Hutchinson was one of the first directors of the Company, a position which he held up to the time of his death. He was also a director of the Wisbech Lighting Company, and took part in several public movements for improving the sanitation and general healthiness of the town. He was deacon of Ely Place Baptist Church with which he had been long associated. The interment took place at the Borough Cemetery, on the 17th December, and was attended by a large number of friends and townsmen, the Rev. W. E. Winks, of Cardiff, conducting a part of the service.

ROBERT BENNETT, Deputy Town Clerk of Wisbech, and the confidential helper of Mr. Francis Jackson, who was Town Clerk for more than half-a-century, died on November 2nd, 1897, at the age of 76. His knowledge of matters connected with the municipal administration of the Borough, as well as of questions affecting the river, made his services of considerable value to the Corporation, and his opinion was generally regarded as sound and safe to follow. He gave useful help to local institutions and managed the North Cambridgeshire Hospital accounts, besides supervising the investments with a care which has materially added to the stability of its resources. He was secretary and treasurer of the Chess Club at the Working Men's Institute, and was a player of exceptional excellence. He was also a prizeman of the Draughts Club, and by acting as returning officer and in other ways gave much useful assistance to that institution. There was a very large attendance of public representatives and others at his funeral on November 5th, in the Leverington Road Cemetery.

HENRY HAMPDEN ENGLISH, J.P., founder of the firm of English Brothers, timber merchants, died at Westwood House, Peterborough, on November 11th, 1897, at the age of 83, and was buried at Duddington, near Stamford. Four years previously Mr. and Mrs. English celebrated their golden wedding, and Mr. English received a presentation from his *employés* on that occasion. He commenced business in 1843, taking over Mr. Jecks' yard at Wisbech, and afterwards went into partnership with his younger

brother and Mr. Joseph Harrison. When they retired, he founded the firm of English Brothers, and in 1883, after 40 years of business life, he practically retired in favour of his sons and heads of departments, who have since converted it into a Limited Liability Company. Mr. English formerly owned a fleet of six fine sailing vessels, before iron steamers were available for timber cargoes, and with a view to accommodate these vessels and develop the trade of the Nene, in 1875 he co-operated with Mr. G. F. Young in obtaining Parliamentary powers for constructing a dock at Sutton Bridge. These efforts resulted in the opening of a dock of 13 acres, but, unfortunately, the principles on which it was constructed proved to be wrong, and it became useless, in which condition it still remains. His early career was associated with the beginning of railways, and the connection of his firm and family with some of the Baltic exporters extended over nearly a century. His integrity and honourable conduct in all business matters was proverbial.

WILLIAM GROOM, J.P., died on February 15th, 1898, at Wisbech, at the age of 67. He was a member of the Corporation for nearly forty years, and was elected Mayor in 1866, Alderman in 1871, on the death of Mr. Richard Young, and subsequently appointed Justice of the Peace for the Isle of Ely and Borough of Wisbech. During his professional career, he attended three epidemics of cholera in Wisbech, and held the position of Medical Officer for nearly all the districts in the Union at different times, and for the Wisbech district during the long period of thirty-seven years. He served the office of President of the Cambs. and Hunts. Branch of the British Medical Association. He was chosen a County Councillor for the Central Division of Wisbech, and was also a North Level Commissioner. He was Director of the Water and Lighting Companies and of the Public Hall Company, and for several years was President of the Wisbech Liberal Association. His interment took place in the Borough Cemetery.

WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, J.P., died on October 20th, 1898, at his residence, Stag's Holt, March, at the age of 64. He was recognised as a high authority upon all agricultural questions, and was Assistant Commissioner to the Duke of Richmond's Commission on Agriculture from 1879 to 1882, making most valuable reports upon the state of agriculture in many counties. In 1891 he was appointed by the Labour Commission to be Senior Assistant Commissioner to enquire into the condition of the agricultural labourer, Lord Derby remarking that no agricultural

- Bath, R., National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place, London.  
 Beatley, Thomas Gage, C.C., 53, Leadenhall Street, London.  
 Bellars, Edwin Bidwell, Market Place, Wisbech. [2 copies.]  
 Bennett, Mrs. Robert, 19, Lower Hill Street, Wisbech.  
 Bennett, Richard, 11, Union Street, Wisbech.  
 Bloy, William Henry, Congo Terrace, Hindley Green, Wigan.  
 Bostock, H., Lower Hill Street, Wisbech.  
 Boulton, W. M., Queen's Road, Wisbech.  
 Bowes, James, 58, Gloucester Street, Pimlico, London.  
 Brown, Oliver P., 7, North End, Wisbech.
- Campbell, Rev. John W., Hampden Villa, Wisbech.  
 Carrick, Geo., Town Clerk of Wisbech. [2 copies.]  
 Chapman, C. T., The Firs, Queen's Road, Wisbech.  
 Childs, E. T., 82, Norfolk Street, King's Lynn.  
 Clarke, Arthur Edward, The Bank, Wisbech.  
 Clarke, Edward, Nene Villa, Wisbech.  
 Clark, Dr. Arthur William, 6, The Crescent, Wisbech.  
 Clark, Jonathan, Sherman Street, Chicago, Ill., U.S.A.  
 Clayton, Collins, Emneth, Wisbech.  
 Climenson, Fredk. William, Republica Argentina, South America.  
 Coales, Thomas T., 28, Lynn Road, Wisbech.  
 Cockett, Henry, Townshend Road, Wisbech.  
 Collins, W. S., The Limes, Townshend Road, Wisbech.  
 Cooper, William, Wolsey House, Wolsey Street, Ipswich.  
 Cope, H., Little South Street, Wisbech.  
 Copeman, C. E. F., York Row, Wisbech.  
 Copley, Dr. W. H., Mounpesson House, Wisbech.  
 Cowling, Thomas, North Brink, Wisbech.  
 Cripps, George R., 14, Bold Street, Liverpool.  
 Cripps, Miss E., Fern Lea, Rake Lane, Upper Brighton, Cheshire.  
 Crosfield, Rev. A. C., Monica Road, Wisbech.
- Daintree, J. Thos. Fenton, Chepstow Road, Croydon. [2 copies.]  
 Dales, John, T., East Dulwich, London, S. E.  
 Dann, James, Bridge Street, Wisbech.  
 Dawbarn, George, Bowthorpe, Wisbech.  
 Dawbarn, Edmund, Wisbech.  
 Dawbarn, James Proctor, 16, Forest Drive, Leytonstone.  
 Dawbarn, Mrs. R. B., Wisbech House, Leamington.  
 Dawbarn, Professor, Loatta, Lydiard Street, Ballarat, Victoria.  
 Dawbarn, Robert, Queen's Road, Wisbech.  
 Dawbarn, Thomas Richards, Elm, Wisbech.

Pyne, Stanfield, Müller, Etty, and others, and his rare specimens of *bric à brac*, which he was ever ready to show and to enlarge upon with a connoisseur's enthusiasm. Mr. Smith was interred in the Church Cemetery at Wisbech.

SAMUEL SMITH, Leverington Terrace, Wisbech, familiarly known to his many friends as "Philosopher" Smith, a complimentary allusion to his varied knowledge and love of scientific investigation, died on July 18th, 1892. He was born on February 28th, 1802, and was consequently in his 91st year. He was an ardent numismatist, possessed a very valuable collection of coins and tokens, of which he possessed an extensive knowledge, also valuable gems, a great variety of shells and entomological specimens, which Mr. and Mrs. Smith collected and critically examined under a powerful microscope constructed by himself. He was also an exceptionally skilled mechanic, as well as an adept in almost all wood and metal working tools, and in grinding and polishing his own specula lenses. He was a liberal patron of the Wisbech Museum, devoting much time in assisting Mr. Algernon Peckover in the arrangement of the objects and naming them. He was an amateur photographer for years before it became a fashionable pastime and many old and interesting photographs of Wisbech are in existence which indicate his ability in this direction. His good-humoured stories and conversation were always attractive to his friends, who never spent a pleasanter hour than when admiring his "curios" and exploring the mysteries of his "den" at Leverington Terrace, which was a treasure-house of rare and unique objects. His interment took place in the Leverington Road Cemetery on Friday, July 22nd, 1892. The Rev. W. E. Winks, in his work entitled *A Pastoral Medley*, thus writes of the late Mr. Smith as "My Philosopher Friend":—

A man of ample means and leisure, he had spent his time and gifts in out-door and in-door study, in collecting specimens, in the manufacture of scientific instruments. What was he? An astronomer? Yes, the best amateur astronomer I ever knew. When asked to show a particular nebula, cluster or double star, he would turn his 4-inch chromatic telescope upon it in a moment. A geologist? A mineralogist? A paleontologist? Yes, he had worked in the field and the laboratory, and made his own wonderful collection, every specimen of which he could name at sight. A conchologist? To be sure. Look at these drawers of beautiful shells, and is not his collection of land and fresh water shells of the Fenland in the Wisbech Museum to this day? Ask him to show you his Hemiptera, Lepidoptera, &c., but not unless you are prepared to go through with them all. See how his eyes sparkle if you bring him a rare Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Ancient British, Saxon, Danish, or English coin, to look at and name for you.

What are these tiny cabinets with their neat little drawers? Microscopic specimens—mineral, botanic, organic—prepared and mounted by himself, and shown in the fine microscope made with his own hands. Look at this little glass cistern full of ditch-water and its lenses at the end. Hear him discourse on the Rotifera, Amœba, Cheironymous Lava, "Dead as ditch-water!" I fancy I hear him say, "Why it's one of the liveliest things I know, is a glass full of ditch-water."

FREDERIC MOREHOUSE METCALFE, J.P., D.L., Clerk of the Peace and of the Isle of Ely County Council, of Inglethorpe Hall, Wisbech, and Julians, Buntingford, succeeded his father, Mr. Charles Metcalfe, in the office of Clerk of the Peace, in 1867, and had thus held it for twenty-six years. His father had previously held it for fifteen years, so that the appointment had been in the family for more than a generation. Mr. F. M. Metcalfe's tenure of office was associated with important changes in the government of the Isle of Ely. When in 1889 a new system of County Government was initiated by Parliament, Mr. Metcalfe took infinite pains and trouble to place arguments before the Government, which resulted in the maintenance of the ancient independent jurisdiction of the Isle of Ely. The organization of the new county administration threw a great amount of work upon the Clerk, and this ultimately affected his health, necessitating a prolonged holiday. Mr. Metcalfe's death took place on October 15th, 1893, while staying at Limmers Hotel, London, from congestion of the lungs, at the age of 65. He held several public appointments, but in no direction did he render more energetic service than in the Volunteer Movement. When the Wisbech Volunteer Corps was formed thirty-five years ago, he entered as a private, and advanced successively to the rank of Ensign, Captain, Major, and finally Lieut.-Colonel in command of the regiment. He was a Justice of the Peace for Norfolk, a Deputy-Lieutenant, Governor of the Wisbech Grammar School, Charity Trustee, and Secretary of the Wisbech Museum. He was Lord of the Manors of Walsoken, Metcalfe and Emneth Hagbech of the parts of Emneth and Walsoken, and Inglethorpe and of Ellingham, near Swaffham; and steward for the late Lord Lieutenant's Manor of Beaupré Hall, Outwell (Mr. C. W. Townley). On the occasion of his marriage with Miss M. F. Meetkerke, of Julians, he was presented by the Volunteers, whom he had formerly commanded, with a dress sword. The funeral took place from Inglethorpe Hall, the remains having been removed from London to his residence, and was attended by the Isle of Ely County Council, the Mayor and Corporation, Magistrates, Clergy, and Representatives of Public Bodies, the day, October 20th,

being that on which, two years before, the first Chairman of the same County Council (Mr. O. C. Pell, J.P.), of which Mr. Metcalfe was Clerk, was buried.

CHARLES WATSON TOWNLEY, M.A., of Fulbourne Manor, near Cambridge, Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, and formerly *Custos Rotulorum* of the Isle of Ely, died on October 17th, 1893. He was at one time Chairman of the Liberal party in Cambridgeshire, and in 1869 made the presentation of a testimonial to Mr. and Mrs. R. Young at a public dinner given to Mr. Young at Cambridge. When Mr. H. J. Adeane died, Mr. Townley succeeded to the office of *Custos Rotulorum* of the Isle of Ely, and on the death of the Earl of Hardwicke in 1874, the Lord Lieutenancy of Cambridgeshire was conferred upon him by Mr. Gladstone, the Duke of Bedford succeeding him in the office of *Custos*. Mr. Townley seceded from the Liberal party on the Home Rule question, and later became Chairman of the Liberal Unionist Association. Mr. Townley discharged the duties of his office with great courtesy and ability, and was very popular in the county, taking an active part in its business as an Alderman of the Cambridgeshire County Council, and in other official capacities. His last visit to Wisbech was for the purpose of opening a grand Volunteer Bazaar and Military Encampment at the Corn Exchange, on the 22nd September, 1892. His interment took place at Fulbourne, on Saturday, October 21st, 1893, the day after that of the Clerk of the Peace (Mr. F. M. Metcalfe), whose death had occurred two days previously to that of the Lord Lieutenant.

ALGERNON PECKOVER, F.L.S., of Sibald's Holme, had entered his 91st year when his death took place on December 10th, 1893. He was the third surviving son of Mr. Jonathan Peckover, the founder of Messrs. Gurney, Birkbeck, and Peckover's Bank, and was a partner in that firm. He was President of the Wisbech Museum for several years, and a liberal benefactor, his gifts during his lifetime to this institution amounting to upwards of £3,000. He erected a building for the enlargement of the library, effecting a great improvement, and furnished it completely for the reception of additional books; also he presented glass cases for the preservation of objects in the Museum, and gave many unique and valuable specimens to fill them. His interest in the Wisbech British Schools before the passing of the Elementary Education Act, was of the most practical and valuable kind, and not long before his death he showed his interest in educational matters by contributing £5,000 to a High Grade School of the Society of Friends at Laughton Park, near Reading. The Hospital and



Working Men's Institute were generously helped, and he contributed largely to the purchase of the Fry Library by the Bible Society. At one time, Mr. Peckover was a member of the Corporation, and was thrice elected Alderman, and subsequently succeeded Mr. William Peckover, his brother, as Borough Treasurer. He retired from the banking firm with which he had been long associated about two years before his death, and when he died at the mature age of 90, left behind him legacies to the Museum, North Cambs. Hospital, Working Men's Institute, Bible Society, and to the *employés* of the Bank. His personal estate was affirmed at £1,163,286. The interment took place in the graveyard attached to the Society of Friends' Meeting House on the North Brink, in the presence of a large number of his personal friends and fellow townsmen.

GEORGE DUPPA COLLINS, South Brink, who died on June 1st, 1894, was in his 91st year, and survived his wife scarcely five months. He was born in London, but had been resident in Wisbech for 64 years, having entered, at the age of 27, the office of Mr. Hugh Jackson, solicitor, and was subsequently taken into partnership. Upon the death of Mr. Hugh Jackson, the firm was known as Jackson and Collins, until about 1858, when the partnership was dissolved, and Mr. Collins practised separately. From 1837 to 1875, a period of 28 years, Mr. Collins discharged the duties of Clerk to the Wisbech Board of Guardians, and was succeeded by his nephew, Mr. James Duppa Collins. He was a generous contributor to the Hospital Endowment and Maintenance Funds, a liberal landlord, and a ready supporter of deserving institutions and objects. He was interred in Emneth churchyard, and his two married daughters, Mrs. Pocock and Mrs. Prankard, have erected a handsome memorial fountain in the Old Market, Wisbech, from the designs of Mr. Armitstead, R.A., to the memory of Mr. and Mrs. Collins.

COLONEL LANCELOT REED, J.P., D.L., of Graysmoor, Elm, died on the 1st September, 1894, within a few days of his 65th birthday. He served in the 4th Suffolk Regiment (Cambridge Militia) for 38 years, and commanded it for seven years until September, 1890, when he resigned. A handsome brass has been erected to his memory by his brother officers in the south aisle of Ely Cathedral, the plate bearing his crest and motto "*In Deo omnia*," with the following inscription:—

In affectionate remembrance of Colonel Lancelot Reed, J.P., D.L., of Elm, Wisbech, born 6th October, 1829; died 1st September, 1894. He served 38 years in the 4th Suffolk Regiment (Cambridge Militia),

and commanded from September, 1883, to September, 1890. Erected by the officers past and present.

Colonel Reed was a Justice of the Peace for the Isle of Ely, and presided over the Wisbech Bench for some years; Chairman of the Court of Sewers, and a County Councillor of the Isle of Ely.

RICHARD BUNBURY DAWBARN, formerly of Wisbech, and latterly resident at Leamington, died on April 10th, 1897, at the age of 64 years. He was the fifth son of Mr. Robert Dawbarn, J.P., and was for some years associated with his father, in the firm of Dawbarn & Sons. His lectures, entitled, "Wisbech in the Days of our Grandfathers," are published in this volume, and before his death he revised the proofs of those interesting reminiscences of bye-gone days. He was the author of the brief sketch of Wisbech in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and his literary and artistic attainments and wide range of general knowledge constituted him an authority upon many historical and topographical matters, one of his successful efforts in that direction being the paper read before the British Archæological Society, when it visited Wisbech, giving a description of Wisbech Castle. In all matters pertaining to art, Mr. Dawbarn was ready to help, whether in promoting the teaching under the South Kensington Department, or in encouraging Art and Industrial Exhibitions. Mr. Dawbarn was associated with many religious and philanthropic movements in Wisbech, until he removed to Leamington, when he was presented by the Hill Street Baptist Church, of which he was a deacon, with a copy of the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, at that time just re-published. His interment took place at Leamington.

JOHN WILLIAM STANLEY, of the firm of Stanley and Hyde, timber merchants, Wisbech, was twice Mayor of Wisbech in 1878-9 and 1879-80, and during his year of office received the presentation of a silver cradle in honour of the addition of a daughter to his family. He was also Alderman, Justice of the Peace for the Borough, Charity Trustee and Governor of the Grammar School. He died on March 25th, 1897, and was interred in the Borough Cemetery.

WILLIAM HUTCHINSON, who died on December 13th, 1897, was Mayor of Wisbech in 1863, and for several years a member of the Corporation. In the memorable "Battle of the Dams," in 1855, when the silting up of the river necessitated the forcible removal of the Waldersey and Guyhirn Dams, erected by the Nene Valley Commissioners, Mr. Hutchinson was one of the members of the Corporation present, and Mr. Hutchinson's brothers,

Messrs. S. K. and J. T. Hutchinson, contractors, of March, superintended the removal of those obstructions in the river, and were subsequently arrested for their share in it. During Mr. Hutchinson's Mayoralty, provision for a better supply of water for the town was the subject of a Parliamentary enquiry, and Mr. Hutchinson with Mr. G. Dawbarn, Ald. Wherry, and others, represented local interests in obtaining powers to form the Waterworks Company. Mr. Hutchinson was one of the first directors of the Company, a position which he held up to the time of his death. He was also a director of the Wisbech Lighting Company, and took part in several public movements for improving the sanitation and general healthiness of the town. He was deacon of Ely Place Baptist Church with which he had been long associated. The interment took place at the Borough Cemetery, on the 17th December, and was attended by a large number of friends and townsmen, the Rev. W. E. Winks, of Cardiff, conducting a part of the service.

ROBERT BENNETT, Deputy Town Clerk of Wisbech, and the confidential helper of Mr. Francis Jackson, who was Town Clerk for more than half-a-century, died on November 2nd, 1897, at the age of 76. His knowledge of matters connected with the municipal administration of the Borough, as well as of questions affecting the river, made his services of considerable value to the Corporation, and his opinion was generally regarded as sound and safe to follow. He gave useful help to local institutions and managed the North Cambridgeshire Hospital accounts, besides supervising the investments with a care which has materially added to the stability of its resources. He was secretary and treasurer of the Chess Club at the Working Men's Institute, and was a player of exceptional excellence. He was also a prizeman of the Draughts Club, and by acting as returning officer and in other ways gave much useful assistance to that institution. There was a very large attendance of public representatives and others at his funeral on November 5th, in the Leverington Road Cemetery.

HENRY HAMPDEN ENGLISH, J.P., founder of the firm of English Brothers, timber merchants, died at Westwood House, Peterborough, on November 11th, 1897, at the age of 83, and was buried at Duddington, near Stamford. Four years previously Mr. and Mrs. English celebrated their golden wedding, and Mr. English received a presentation from his *employés* on that occasion. He commenced business in 1843, taking over Mr. Jecks' yard at Wisbech, and afterwards went into partnership with his younger

brother and Mr. Joseph Harrison. When they retired, he founded the firm of English Brothers, and in 1883, after 40 years of business life, he practically retired in favour of his sons and heads of departments, who have since converted it into a Limited Liability Company. Mr. English formerly owned a fleet of six fine sailing vessels, before iron steamers were available for timber cargoes, and with a view to accommodate these vessels and develop the trade of the Nene, in 1875 he co-operated with Mr. G. F. Young in obtaining Parliamentary powers for constructing a dock at Sutton Bridge. These efforts resulted in the opening of a dock of 13 acres, but, unfortunately, the principles on which it was constructed proved to be wrong, and it became useless, in which condition it still remains. His early career was associated with the beginning of railways, and the connection of his firm and family with some of the Baltic exporters extended over nearly a century. His integrity and honourable conduct in all business matters was proverbial.

WILLIAM GROOM, J.P., died on February 15th, 1898, at Wisbech, at the age of 67. He was a member of the Corporation for nearly forty years, and was elected Mayor in 1866, Alderman in 1871, on the death of Mr. Richard Young, and subsequently appointed Justice of the Peace for the Isle of Ely and Borough of Wisbech. During his professional career, he attended three epidemics of cholera in Wisbech, and held the position of Medical Officer for nearly all the districts in the Union at different times, and for the Wisbech district during the long period of thirty-seven years. He served the office of President of the Cambs. and Hunts. Branch of the British Medical Association. He was chosen a County Councillor for the Central Division of Wisbech, and was also a North Level Commissioner. He was Director of the Water and Lighting Companies and of the Public Hall Company, and for several years was President of the Wisbech Liberal Association. His interment took place in the Borough Cemetery.

WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, J.P., died on October 20th, 1898, at his residence, Stag's Holt, March, at the age of 64. He was recognised as a high authority upon all agricultural questions, and was Assistant Commissioner to the Duke of Richmond's Commission on Agriculture from 1879 to 1882, making most valuable reports upon the state of agriculture in many counties. In 1891 he was appointed by the Labour Commission to be Senior Assistant Commissioner to enquire into the condition of the agricultural labourer, Lord Derby remarking that no agricultural







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